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OBSERVATIONS

ON

TACITUS.

IN WHICH

His CHARACTER as a WRITER

AND

An HISTORIAN,

Is impartially considered, and compared with that of *LIVY.*

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LONDON:
Printed for RICHARD MANBY, on *Ludgate-Hill.*
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PREFACE.

AMONG the ancient Writers who have engag'd the Attention, and ſhar'd the Applauſe of the learned World, the Author here obſerv'd upon, has not been eſteem'd the moſt inconſiderable. He has been tranſlated into moſt of the European *Languages, and illuſtrated by the Labours of the moſt learned Criticks of different Nations. He has been the*

School of Statesmen, and the Study and Delight of Kings.

From the Encomiums given him by some of his Admirers, one might indeed imagine him the most extraordinary Genius in the World of Letters, and but one Degree remov'd from Inspiration, if not inspir'd.

But Praise or Censure carried to Excess, bear strong Marks of Suspicion, as generally proceeding from Passion, or Prejudice, rather than Truth. In the Case of Writers, one might expect their Merit would be try'd without Partiality; especially the Merits of a Writer, so many hundred Years in his Grave; and to whom it may be supposed, none of his Commentators, dead or living, have had, or can have any personal Relation, or Party-Prejudice. Yet still the learned World

continues divided in their Opinion of the Merit of this Writer. The following Obſervations, which occur'd upon the Peruſal of his Works, are therefore offer'd to the Publick with a Deſign to contribute ſomething towards ſettling his true Character as a Writer, *and an* Hiſtorian.

In this Enquiry, the Author is not content to give general Encomiums or Cenſures at large; but refers to Paſſages, Facts and Characters quite through the Writer; not thinking that ſome beauteous or fine Thoughts, without Regard had to the Manner of their being introduced, and the Juſtneſs of their Application, are ſufficient to juſtify the Applauſe given him by other Writers; or that a few Faults in a Work ſo extenſive can ſupport the Charge he brings againſt him.

I have only to add, that as this Writer has been commonly quoted on the Side of Infidelity, if, upon Examination, his Merit be not found so extraordinary, nor his Authority so weighty, as has been generally admitted, or contended for; some small Service may seem done by this Essay to the Cause of True Religion.

ERRATA.

PAGE 19. line 25 read *produce*. p. 23. l. 21. r. *Offices*. p. 24. l. 19. for *his* r. *this*. p. 25. l. 19. r. *heretable*. p. 30. l. 9. r. *Basilick*. p. 31. l. 19. r. *veteri*. p. 35. l. 7. r. *Quinctii*. l. 9. r. *Drusus*. l. 13. r. *Alban*. p. 45. l. 3. r. *describe*. l. 9. r. *Night*. p. 50. l. 2. after *Country* no Stop. p 72. l. 10. r. *secuta*. p. 79. l. 9. r. *say*. p. 87. l. 10. for *when a* r. *whence*. p. 89. l. 16. after *Tumults* a Comma. p. 91. l. 11. r. *there*. p. 97. l. 23. r. *unmerciful*. p. 98. l. 13. r. *Fears*. p. 104 l. 9. & Note r. *Xiphilin*. p. 109. l. 8. r. *any*. p. 120. l. 16. r. *opiniative*. p. 122. Note, for 800. r. 8*vo*. p. 143. Note l. 2. for *is* r. *are*. p. 144. l. 12. dele *that he*. p. 145 l. 17. r. *these*. p. 150 l. 17. r. *subtilly*. p. 151. l. 22. r. *Ahithophal*. p. 152 l. 5. & 8. r. *Italus's*. p. 153. l. 5 r. *neque Galli*. l. 7. r. *Tenctcrians*. p. 192. Note, r. *prol*. p. 201. l. 11. r. *seat*. p. 206. l. 18. r. *or* Spect. p. 213. l. 13. dele *the*. p. 215. l. 7. r. *till* the Sur. p. 216. l. 16. & p. 217. l. 15. r. *arbitrarily*. p. 217. Note, r. *prol*. p. 230. Note, l. 2. r. *linguâ*. p. 238. l. 5. r. *Craft*. p. 259. l. 3. r. *scholastic*. p. 285. l. 19. r. *'tis* Nature. p. 288. l. 6. r. *presumptuous*. p. 290. l. 26. r. *of Fact*.

INTRO-

INTRODUCTION.

TO the following Obſervations was intended to have been prefix'd a Diſſertation on Hiſtory, in order to juſtify the Cenſure here paſs'd upon *Tacitus*; but upon ſecond Thoughts, and a Peruſal of what had been already written on this Subject, particularly by *Lucian* among the Ancients, and by *Strada*, *Voſſius*, *Le Moyne* and *Rapin* among the Moderns; all future

Attempts of the ſame Kind ſeemed in a great Meaſure uſeleſs. The common Senſe of the Reader, is therefore principally appealed to; and indeed, Laws of Hiſtory, and Rules of Criticiſm, not founded in common Senſe, are Matters rather of Speculation and Curioſity, than of any great Advantage to the Writer, or the Reader. In Compoſition it may be difficult to ſay, What is the utmoſt Perfection, and how far the Powers of Genius may extend? but a Deviation from that common Standard of what is regular, juſt and fit, which we have from a kind of inſtinctive Sagacity, or natural Perception, is more eaſily obſervable. A good Ear, and a good Eye, will diſcern Irregularity, and perceive a Diſſonance, tho' the Critic may be no Profeſſor of any Art.

Thus

Thus in Hiſtory, what is monſtrous and affected, a departure from Truth, from Nature, and decency of Character, will readily ſtrike a Mind intelligent and ſober, tho' unequal to the arduous Taſk of a Writer, and not acquainted with the formal Rules of juſt Compoſition. An irregular or bad Hiſtorian, is perhaps more expoſed to Cenſure, and eaſier to be convicted of a Failure in his Art, than either a Poet, or a Philoſopher. In the former, Hiſtoric Truth is not of the Eſſence of his Work: And Philoſophic Truth, which is the Province of the latter, is often of ſo abſtracted a Nature, as to eſcape even a diligent Enquirer. But Hiſtory being a Recital of Fact, the Foundation and Subject whereof is Human Nature; the Power of which we experimentally feel and know, a blot here is ſooner diſcover'd.

ver'd. No Powers of Genius can recommend to our ſerious Belief what is falſe and fabulous. Where Truth and Nature, the great Exemplars, are over-look'd, or over-charg'd, the Piece, tho' labour'd with the utmoſt Art, muſt appear ridiculous.

As theſe are the Subject and Ground-Work of Hiſtory (for otherwiſe it would be Romance) ſo its End is Inſtruction; for Pleaſure ſeems rather the End of Poetry. An Hiſtorian muſt therefore be a wiſe Man; qualified either for the Cabinet, or the Camp. Mere Narration would be a Journal, not a Hiſtory. Yet he muſt not be always reflecting and moralizing; for then he would depart from his proper Character, and aſſume the Moraliſt and Politician. He muſt too be a good Man; otherwiſe, he will but entertain, when he ſhould inſtruct;

inſtruct; and fill the Head, rather than improve the Heart.

The Style is what may be call'd the Dreſs, and ſhould be ſuch as may juſtly expreſs, or modeſtly adorn the Truth, which is, as it were, the Body of Hiſtory. The fewer Decorations in an Hiſtorian the better. Ornament, when too much affected, hides, rather than ſetts off natural Beauty. Art is offenſive, except when it conceals itſelf, and looks like Nature. Studied Compoſition, and labour'd Deſcription may ſtrike the Imagination, or, like Dreſs, amuſe the Fancy; but Truth, like Beauty, reaches the Soul, and moves all that is human within us. It is the Hiſtorian's Perfection to repreſent this properly. Here indeed, the main Difficulty of his Province lyes. The Quarry is common to all; but to give the rough Materials the proper

proper Poliſh, and to diſpoſe them in juſt Order, requires a maſterly Hand. Truth, as it appears in all the different Scenes, which compoſe the Hiſtoric Drama, in the different Characters that preſent themſelves, and paſs before us on the Stage, is not eaſily conceived, or expreſſed. To comprehend, ſo as fully to diſplay, the Penetration of the Stateſman, the enterprizing Soul of the Heroe, the Firmneſs of the Patriot, the Eloquence of the Senator, the Nature of the various Paſſions of Mankind, and the Effects of different Fortunes on the Human Mind, requires the moſt univerſal Genius, and a Capacity as extenſive as Nature, and all its Appearances in the Moral World.

Beſides the Peculiarity, which diſtinguiſhes the different Characters and Actions of Men, and which muſt be carefully

carefully attended to; great Regard muſt be had by the Hiſtorian to the general Order, and Diſpoſition of his Work. It muſt, tho' diſtinct and clear, be connected and of a Piece; not abounding with ſuperfluous Ornaments, and unneceſſary Deſcriptions. His utmoſt Art muſt be laid out on the principal Figures of his Piece, and yet theſe are not to be over-crouded. Too many Actors will breed Confuſion. Leſſer Characters and common Actions ſhould be caſt into Shades, that the moſt diſtinguiſh'd may appear in the fulleſt Light.

I will but obſerve further, that an Hiſtorian muſt, above all Things, be an honeſt Man. By Honeſty, I mean not what every Writer or Prater on the favourite Side of a Queſtion will call ſuch, a Zeal for his Party; but the direct contrary, Impartiality. Men

and

and Characters, Vice and Virtue, Wiſdom and Folly, are only to be deſcribed ſo far as they affect the public Meaſures and common Happineſs of a Nation. The honeſt Hiſtorian will be an equal Enemy to Faction and Flattery, unbiaſs'd in his Cenſures of the Living and the Dead, and at the fartheſt Diſtance from perſonal Malice, or Party-prejudice. A Stroke of Calumny muſt deſtroy the Credit of the Writer, and much more a ſettled Malignity. Should a Painter of a malicious Turn betray his Diſpoſition in all his Pieces, and give to Innocence a childiſh Simplicity, to native Modeſty a deſpicable Meanneſs, to the Eye of Wiſdom an Air of Craft: Should he make the Gay mad, and the Serious melancholy, he would but ill conſult either his Credit or his Intereſt.

Upon

Upon theſe few Principles we preſume to ſay, that *Tacitus* is not a juſt Writer, tho' we allow him a great Wit. He is void of Candour, wants Judgment, exceeds Nature, and violates Truth. He may be inſtructive, but is leſs ſo, becauſe not agreeable. We acknowledge his extraordinary Parts, which are ſadly abus'd by a ſuperior Vanity.

OBSERVATIONS

ON

TACITUS.

PART I.

CHAP. I.

TO Vanity may we not aſcribe his tedious Digreſſions and frequent Excurſions into remote Ages and diſtant Nations, which have little or no Connection with the *Roman* Story, or the Times, which he propoſes as the Subject of his Writing?

I remember not to have met with any Objection to *Tacitus* on this Account, which I

am the more ſurpriz'd at, as the Affectation here is ſo very apparent. He lets ſlip no Opportunity, but catches at any little Hint, and makes forc'd Connections to run back into Antiquity, to give his Work the more venerable Air, and at the ſame Time diſplay his own deep Erudition.

In one Place you have the Antiquities and Wonders of *Egypt*, the *Nile*, the *Canopus*, the *Grecian Menelaus*'s Arrival here, the moſt ancient *Hercules*, the huge Obeliſks, King *Rhameſes*, and his famous Conqueſts, the Revenues of this once opulent Kingdom, the Pyramids, and artificial Lakes [a].

And not content with this upon another Occaſion (*Claudius*'s adding new Letters to the *Roman* Alphabet) we are immediately carry'd back to the *Egyptian* Hieroglyphicks, and entertain'd with the various traditionary Opinions of the Origin of Letters; and ſo of courſe expect to hear of the *Phœnician Cadmus*, the *Athenian Cecrops*, *Linus* the *Theban*, *Palamedes* the *Argive*, *Simonides*, *Damaratus* the *Corinthian*, and the *Arcadian Evander* [b].

And as *Egypt* is an inexhauſted Subject, and affords endleſs Matter for a ſpeculative

[a] Ann. 2. c. 59, *&c.* [b] *Ibid.* 11. c. 14.

Antiquarian,

Antiquarian, we have, in the fourth Book of his Hiſtory, a further Account of ſome of its moſt ancient Gods, and ſuperſtitious Trumpery, upon a very ridiculous Occaſion, *viz.* *Veſpaſian*'s working Miracles by the Power of the God *Serapis*.

Yet *Egypt* was too narrow a Province for the Diſplay of our Author's Knowledge in Antiquity. The Cities of *Aſia* and *Greece* muſt therefore be brought upon the Stage, petitioning the Senate for the Privilege of a Sanctuary, or Leave to erect a Temple, that the fabulous Abſurdities of every Country may have the Honour of being deſcanted upon by our learned Annaliſt. Hence are intermix'd with the *Roman* Story, the big-belly'd *Latona*, and her Offspring, the ſlaughter'd *Cyclops*, the ſuppliant *Amazons*, the *Lydian Hercules*, *Diana Trivia*, the *Perſian Diana*, the *Paphian Venus*, the *Salminian Jupiter*, with *Teucer*, the Son of *Telamon* [c].

Upon the Competition between the *Lacedemonians* and *Meſſenians*, for the Right that each People claim'd to the Temple of *Diana Limenetis*, the former Produce, as Proofs of their Title, the ancient Authority of their Annals, and the Hymns of their Poets. The

[c] Ann. 3. c. 61, &c.

Meſſenians plead the ancient Partition of *Peloponneſus* amongſt the Deſcendants of *Hercules* [d].

So again upon the Cities of *Aſia*, contending for the Honour of building a Temple, we hear of the Wars of *Perſeus* and *Ariſtonicus*, the City of *Troy*, famed for the Glory of its Antiquity, *Tyrrhenus* and *Lydus*, (whence the firſt Names and Settlements of the *Lydians* and *Tyrrhenians*) *Tantalus*, the Son of *Jove*, *Theſeus* of divine Race, *Pelops* and his Colonies, and the *Amazons* once again [e]. — Circumſtances of no very great Moment, bordering on, or much obſcur'd by Fable, and as little deſerving, one would imagine, the ſerious Attention of a *Roman* Senate, as the Writer's or the Reader's Notice.

Being to relate the Deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, he immediately ſets himſelf to recount the Original of the *Jewiſh* Nation, and at once ſteps back to the Times of *Saturn*'s Expulſion from his Kingdoms: From the powerful Influence of whoſe Star, and becauſe moſt of the heavenly Conſtellations finiſh their Courſe by Sevens, the *Jews*, we are told, hallow or obſerve the ſeventh Year [f].

[d] Ann. 4. c. 45. [e] *Ibid.* 4. c. 57, 58.
[f] Hiſt. l. 5. c. 2.

Thus

Thus ſeriouſly, and with great Oſtentation of deep Erudition, does *Tacitus* relate the Extravagancies of Poets and Mythologiſts; moſt of which, it is well known, are ſo far from being true, and conſequently ſo little worthy of the Hiſtorian's Regard, that they are generally the moſt abſurd Falſhoods, and direct Corruptions of civil Hiſtory.

How much better does *Xiphilin*, the Abridger of *Dion Caſſius*, acquit himſelf upon ſuch an Occaſion as this before us! After relating the taking of *Jeruſalem* by *Pompey*, he adds, "I am wholly unacquainted with the Original "of the Name of the *Jews*, tho' it is well "known to all thoſe who obſerve their Laws, "tho' Natives of another Country. The "*Romans* have often leſſen'd their Number, "and yet they have multiplied ſo extreamly, "that it is not now in the Power of Laws to "extirpate them. Their Cuſtoms are quite dif-"ferent from thoſe of other Nations; for be-"ſides their particular Way of Living, they "adore none of the common Deities. They "acknowledge but one, whom they worſhip "with great Reſpect, and to whom they ren-"der very great Honours. There never was "any Image in *Jeruſalem*, becauſe they be-"lieve their God to be inviſible and ineffable.

" In a Word, the religious Worſhip with " which they ſerve him, ſurpaſſes that of all " other Nations. They have built him a " Temple of prodigious Greatneſs and Beauty, " and which is very remarkable in this, that " it was open on the Top, and had no Roof. " The Day, which bears the Name of *Saturn*, " is ſacred with them; and among other Cere- " monies they obſerve upon that Day, they " abſtain from all Manner of Labour. So " much for what relates to their God. To " ſay who he is, when he began to be wor- " ſhiped, and with what Devotion they ſerve " him; beſides that ſeveral Authors have treat- " ed of it, is no Part of this Hiſtory [g]."

Upon mentioning the *Iberians* and *Albanians*, wild Foreſters of *Parthia*, they muſt be made more conſiderable by their Deſcent from *Jaſon*, who could not be mentioned, but *Medea* muſt attend him with the Oracle of *Phryxus* and his Ram [h]: Tho' theſe *Iberians* were, after all, no better than *Orodes* repreſents them, — *ignobilem Hiberum mercenario Milite.*

The Antiquity of the Iſle of *Coos*, of *Byzantium*, and its firſt Planting [i]: the Hiſtory of the

[g] *Xiphil.* tranſlated by *Manning*, Vol. I. p. 13, 14.
[h] Ann. 6. c. 34. [i] *Ibid.* 12. c. 61, 63.

Temple

Temple of *Venus* in the Isle of *Cyprus*[k], (for which Digression he prepares the Reader with some Decency, by mentioning the amourous Soul of *Titus*, who makes the Visit to it;)—— the Oracle of the Clarian *Apollo* at *Colophon*[l], are tedious and romantick Digressions; and nothing but the Antiquity of the Places has invited our Author to lay himself out, and spread all his Knowledge of the Fable and Absurdity, which without these Opportunities had been lost to the World.

Nay, not only ancient Kingdoms and Cities, long since buried in Ruins, but the fam'd Deeds, and heroic Actions of Antiquity, are frequently recall'd to the Memory of the Reader; tho' this intemperate intermixing with his own Story those memorable Exploits, instead of adding Ornament, does but disgrace the inconsiderable Transactions, which are the Subject of his Annals.

The ancient Officers, ancient Rites, and ancient Laws, are recounted with all the Accuracy and Diligence of one, who should profess to write the *Roman* Antiquities.

The *Pomærium* must be enlarg'd *more prisco*[m]; that thence the Annalist might have an Opportunity of descanting upon the original

[k] Hist. l. 2. c. 2, 3. [l] Ann. 2. c. 54. [m] *Ibid.* 12. c. 23.

Situation of the City and its conſequent Improvements: As upon the Capitol's being burnt down, you have the Hiſtory of it from its Foundation [n].

Upon the Place of *Flamen Dialis* being vacant by the Death of *Servius Maluginenſis*, you have an inſipid Diſcourſe from the Emperor upon the ancient Cuſtom of Confarreation; *(prævetuſtas Ceremonias*, as one of the Commentators calls it.) This Diſcourſe of the Emperor's ſeems more impertinent, as the Son here immediately ſucceeded the Father; and the Senate, notwithſtanding the Emperor's Interpoſition, agreed to make no Change from the original Inſtitution [o].

When the Conſul *Dolabella* propos'd that an Entertainment of Gladiators ſhould be annually exhibited by the Quæſtors, we have a long Account of the Inſtitution of his Office; and the Conſulſhip and Dictatorſhip are lugg'd into the Account [p].

Upon the Death of *Lucius Piſo*, Governor of the City, we have the Hiſtory of this Office in the Times of the firſt Kings, *Romulus*, *Tullus Hoſtilius* and *Tarquin*; under the Conſuls, and in the Time of *Auguſtus* [q].

[n] Hiſt. l. 3. c. 71.
[o] Ann. 4. c. 16.
[p] *Ibid.* 11. c. 22.
[q] *Ibid.* 6. c. 11.

If

If the tranſient Mention is made of the Puniſhment of ſome Crime, or a Law to reſtrain any Enormity, you have immediately a Reſearch backwards into the Progreſs of the Crime, or the various Modulations of the Law, from the Foundation of the City to the preſent Time.

Upon the qualifying the Law *Poppæa*, he goes back to the Original of Laws in general, and deſcribes their Progreſs; and ſo we are informed of the Laws of *Minos*, *Licurgus*, *Solon*, *Numa*, *Tullus Hoſtilius*, *Ancus Martius*, and *Servius Tullius*; and thence down to *Auguſtus Cæſar*[r].

The Impropriety of this Way of Writing will eaſily appear by ſuppoſing a learned Hand employed in Writing the Tranſactions of the Year 1748; and who, upon mentioning the Law diſſolving the heritable Juriſdictions of *Scotland*, ſhould go back to the Original of Laws in general; and moralizing at large, like our Annaliſt, ſhould thence deduce the ancient Laws of *France*, *Spain*, and the *Empire*, concluding with the Laws of *Malcolm*, and the moſt ancient *Scottiſh* Kings; none of which had any Relation to the Law diſſolving the heretable Juriſdictions. We might poſſibly ad-

[r] Ann. 3. c. 26, &c.

mire

mire his Learning and Acuteneſs; but ſhould think them more properly employ'd in ſeparate Diſſertations upon thoſe ſpeculative Subjects.

Thus again upon ſome Thoughts entertain'd of compoſing the War between *Otho* and *Vitellius*, we have a Digreſſion upon the Growth of Ambition with the Increaſe of the Empire. However, to do our Author Juſtice, ſuppoſing an Impropriety here, or in the Account of the Original of Laws, 'tis amply made amends for by the Truth of his Remarks, and his fine Reflections.

The old obſolete Laws relating to Uſury, are with more Propriety quoted at a Time, when the Iniquity of the Uſurers was the Subject of the Senate's Debate[f].

Ancient Precedents are recited, and the primitive Manners of *Rome* frequently introduc'd, when little of the ancient Diſcipline was retain'd in the Army, and none of the ancient Virtue among the Citizens. Moſt of the Debates in *Tacitus*'s Accuſations, or Defence of Criminals, are ſupported by Precedents from Antiquity.

No Phraſes are more common with him than *priſcus Mos—vetus Mos—vetere more — more*

[f] Ann. 6. c. 16.

priſco

prisco—repetitus ex vetusto mos[t]. In the Army you have a Decimation *ex vetere memoria*[u], and a Civic Crown[w]. Provinces are allotted *vetere ex more*. *Tiberius* and *Claudius* are both great Antiquarians. *Claudius*'s Representation to the Senate concerning the College of Sooth-sayers, the most ancient Discipline of *Italy*, will appear to many no better than Impertinence. The Reason he gives for his Application to the Senate upon this Occasion, is, that the Common-wealth was ever wont in Times of Calamity, to have Recourse to those of that Science. Was this the Case now? The direct contrary: *Læta quidem in præsens omnia*. Nor do we find any Decree of the Senate, in Consequence of this Representation of *Claudius* to the Senate, worthy remembring or recording[x].

Again, when the same *Claudius* confirms the Jurisdiction of the Imperial Procurators, we have the Regulations of *Augustus* upon this Subject, the popular Ordinances of the Tribune *Sempronius*, the Establishment of *Servilius* the Consul, and hence the bloody Wars of *Marius* and *Sylla*, with the Power of *Oppius* and *Balbus*, under the Dictator *Cæsar*[y].

[t] Ann. 3. c. 31. *Ibid.* 2. 34, 85, 32. *Ibid.* 4. 26, &c. [u] *Ibid.* 3. c. 21. [w] *Ibid.* 12. c. 23. [x] *Ibid.* 11. c. 15. [y] *Ibid.* 12. c. 60.

Tacitus

Tacitus is equally ambitious in the Characters he draws, or the Actions he relates, of forming them to anceint Models, and a Reſemblance of ancient Heroiſm. *Tiberius* is a Prince *antiquæ parcimoniæ: Agrippina*, Wife of *Germanicus*, is *unicum Antiquitatis ſpecimen: Torquata* is *priſcæ ſanctimoniæ Virgo* [z]. *Germanicus* muſt be both *Alexander* and *Scipio*. *Tiberius* refuſes to have *Arminius* taken off by Poiſon; by this equalling in Glory, ſays the Annaliſt, the ancient *Roman* Generals, who rejected, and diſclos'd a Plot to poiſon King *Pyrrhus* [a]. Upon the taking of *Caractacus*, it is compared to *Scipio*'s taking *Syphax*, or *Paulus*'s taking *Pyrrhus* [b]. Upon mention made of *Tacfarinas*, a Deſerter and a Robber, we are reminded of the Ravages of *Spartacus*; when the Commonwealth was engaged in the mighty Wars of *Sertorius* and *Mithridates* [c]. So the *Gladiators* attempting to eſcape from *Prænesſte*, tho' immediately maſter'd, revive the Terror of *Spartacus* and the publick Miſeries of old [d]. *Civilis* muſt be another *Sertorius*, or *Hannibal* [e]. When *Maroboduus* ſurrenders himſelf, *Tiberius* is made to tell the Senate,

[z] Ann. 3. c. 4, 69, &c. [a] *Ibid.* 2. c. 87. [b] *Ibid.* 12. c. 38. [c] *Ibid.* 3. c. 73. [d] *Ibid.* 15. 46. [e] Hiſt. l. 4. 12.

that

that never had *Philip* of *Macedon* been so terrible to the *Athenians*, nor *Pyrrhus*, nor *Antiochus* to the *Roman* People [f]. *Claudius* accepts the Submission of *Mithridates*, after the Manner of the ancient *Romans* [g]. *Blæsus* must have the Badges of Triumph, and be saluted *Imperator* (*prisco erga Duces honore*) for defeating *Tacfarinas*, who was at last routed by five hundred Men [h]. A Victory even over Women, weak and unwarlike, is *clara & antiquis Victoriis par* [i]. *Antonius* defending himself for the Destruction of *Cremona*, pleads the greater Mischief and Misery that former civil Wars had brought upon the Republick [k]. *Pætus*, when block'd up by the *Parthians*, quotes the *Luculli*, the *Pompeys*, *& si qua Cæsares obtinendæ donandæve Armeniæ egerant* [l]. Who would not imagine the Man was here Conqueror, or at least not conquered? Nor can his Troops surrender to *Vologeses* without justifying themselves by the Example of the two old *Roman* Armies at *Caudium*, and *Numantium* [m]. If a Brother slays his Brother, it was so, says our Historian, *& prioribus Civium Bellis*; and we are referr'd to the Times of *Cinna* [n]. If *Vitellius* makes a Consul for a Day, we are told,

[f] Ann. 2. 63. [g] *Ibid.* 12. 20. [h] *Ibid.* 3. 21, 72, 74. [i] *Ibid.* 14. 37. [k] Hist. 3. 53. [l] *Ibid.* 15. 14. [m] *Ibid.* 15. 13. [n] Hist. 5. 51.

so

ſo it was under the Dictator *Cæſar*[o]. *Galba* adopts *Piſo*, after the Manner of the deified *Auguſtus*[p]. If *Trebellienus Rufus* is made Guardian of the Kingdom of *Thrace*, for the Sons of *Rhemetalces* and *Cotys*, who are Minors, it muſt anſwer the Example of *M. Lepidus*, ſent by the Senate, Guardian of the Children of *Ptolemy* in *Egypt*[q]. *Lepidus* repairs the Baſiliſk of *Paulus*, a peculiar Monument of the *Emilian* Family; and in doing this, he muſt be ſuppoſed to have followed the Example of *Taurus Philippus* and *Balbus*[r]. *Nero* delights in Muſick; *quod Regibus & antiquis Ducibus factitatum*[s]. And Objections ſeem purpoſely ſtarted againſt his Youth and Inexperience, to make Room for the Reply, That *Pompey*, in his eighteenth Year, and *Octavius Cæſar*, in his nineteenth, each ſuſtain'd the Weight of a civil War[t]; as if the Excurſions of the *Parthians* into *Armenia*, and their Hoſtilities againſt *Rhadamiſtus*, threaten'd equal Danger to the Republick, as the Times of *Pompey* and *Cæſar*; or *Nero* had given any Specimens of a military Proweſs, which might promiſe him a Rival of thoſe diſtinguiſh'd Generals.

[o] Hiſt. 3. 36. [p] *Ibid.* 1. 20. [q] Ann. 2. 27.
[r] *Ibid.* 3. 72. [s] *Ibid.* 14. 14. [t] *Ibid.* 13. 6.

Nay,

Nay, the ancient Republic, (a Reproach and Scandal to the Age of which he is writing the Hiſtory) is appeal'd to in a controverted Affair by thoſe, who could ſcarce, one would imagine, have mention'd it without a Bluſh [u]. And an infamous Informer, *Marcellus Epirus*, has the Effrontery to plead for ancient Inſtitutions [w]; when the very Name of ancient *Rome* ſhould have ſtruck dead with Shame ſuch enormous Offenders againſt its Cuſtoms and Manners.

The Barrenneſs of his own Subject, I will ſuppoſe, as well as his Vanity, might put *Tacitus* upon making theſe frequent Excurſions into the more diſtinguiſhed Æras of the Republic: For as to the Cauſes he aſſigns for referring to Antiquity, they are by no means anſwer'd in the Inſtances produc'd, or the Examples quoted. *Sed hæc & alia ex veteris memoria repetita, quotiens Res Locuſque exempla Recti; aut ſolatia mali poſcent, haud abſurdé memorabimus* [x].

Under this Head I cannot but obſerve how eager *Tacitus* is to celebrate a Deſcendant of one of the ancient Families of *Rome*, tho' frequently diſtinguiſhed for nothing but Guilt. A *Gracchus*, one of *Calphurnian* or *Emilian* Blood, cannot be mentioned, tho', perhaps a

[u] Ann. 11. 23 [w] Hiſt. 4. 8. [x] *Ibid.* 3. 51.

Perſon

Person of the most infamous Character, but you are reminded of their illustrious Race; as if to dignify their Crimes, and raise Pity for their Sufferings; when an honest Indignation had been better express'd, in order to raise the same Passion in the Reader, against Actors of the most horrid Villainies, and Corrupters of some of the best Blood that ever flow'd in human Veins. You have a *Regulus* and *Africanus*, tho' no better than Informers [y]. The Death of the profligate *Mamercus Scaurus*, must be celebrated as becoming the Dignity of the ancient *Emilii* [z]. The infamous and guilty *Lepida*, we are told, was Great-grand-Daughter to *Pompey* and *Sylla*; and so must be introduc'd into the Theatre to invoke her illustrious Ancestors, especially the great *Pompey*, whose Statues were round in view; the Theatre itself a Monument of his raising [a]. When *Cn. Domitius* and *Vibius Marsus* are accus'd as Adulterers and Associates with the infamous *Albucilla*, you are sure to be told of their Eminence, noble Descent, and the ancient Honours of their Family [b]. *Claudius* cannot condemn *Lollia*, without relating who was her Mother, her Uncle and Great Uncle; which, considering the signal Splendor

[y] Hist. 4. 41. 2. [z] Ann. 6. 29. [a] *Ibid.* 3. 23.
[b] *Ibid.* 6. 47.

of

of her Birth, were probably as well known to the Senate, his Audience, as to himself[c].

Many of *Tacitus*'s Characters are so insignificant, that he is obliged to recite the Actions of both Father and Grand-father to ennoble the Son, who would otherwise have been unworthy of our Notice. Thus upon mentioning *Domitius*, we are told of his Father's Power at Sea in the Civil War, and of his changing Sides; and that his Grand-father fell in the Battle of *Pharsalia*[d]. *Furius Camillus* is celebrated for his Virtues, and as deriving his Descent from *Camillus*, *Reiperator Urbis*; where the Annalist, erroneously passes over two Branches of the Family, that he may bring in *Camillus* the most ancient and the most distinguish'd of the Race[e]. *Messala*, Collegue with *Nero*, and a pensionary Consul must be celebrated, not for one Action, during his Office, worthy of Remembrance, but because some few old Men (and but very few) remember'd his Great grand-father, *Corvinus* the Orator, to have been Collegue in the same Magistracy with the Deified *Augustus*, who by one Degree more remote was Ancestor to *Nero*[f].

[c] Ann. 12. 22. [d] *Ibid.* 4. 44. [e] *Ibid.* 2. 52. [f] *Ibid.* 13. 34.

Nay, Anceſtry, where famed for ſuperior Crimes, muſt have a Place in his Characters, and Writings: As if the Parents Crimes ennobled the Deſcendants. The Death of *Anthony* had ſcarce been mentioned, but for his Race greatly illuſtrious: His Father having been put to Death for Adultery with *Julia*. What an odd Circumſtance is it in the Character of *Sabinus*, that his Great grand-mother had play'd the Whore with *Julius Cæſar*[g]?

At the ſame Time that Actions are condemn'd or commended according to their Conformity to, or Abhorrence from, the Models and Precedents of Antiquity, without regarding, whether Antiquity was always in the Right or not, and Characters and Perſons are ennobled for their long Deſcent, tho' their Anceſters might be as famous for Guilt as Greatneſs, true Nobility is ſcarce allow'd its Merit for want of this Stamp of Antiquity. Thus *Aſinius Agrippa* is mentioned as deſcended from Anceſtors more illuſtrious than ancient[h].

Nor is our Author content with telling you from what diſtinguiſh'd Progenitors moſt of his Actors are deſcended; but if a ſimular Name comes a-croſs, he muſt acquaint you to what ancient Family, it does *Not* belong[i].

[g] Hiſt. 4. 55. [h] Ann. 4. 61. [i] *Ibid.* 3. 48.

The

The Death and Funeral of any Person of ancient Descent is frequently attended with a History of the Family, or some Pomp and Imagery of Antiquity. Thus when *Junia* dies, the Wife of *Cassius* and Sister of *Brutus*, twenty Statues of the noblest Families, the *Manlii*, the *Quinelii*, and other Names of equal Lustre were carried before the Funeral [k]. So upon the Death of *Deusus*, most signal was the Splendor of the Funeral in a conspicuous Procession of Images, when at it appear'd in a pompous Train, *Cneus* Father of the *Julian* Race, all the *Albon* Kings, with *Romulus* the Founder of *Rome*; next the *Sabine* Nobility, *Attus Clausus* and his Descendants of the *Claudian* Family [l].

I cannot conclude this Chapter without observing, that the Fault here objected to *Tacitus*, is in some Degree chargeable upon our divine Poet, *Milton*; who is too pompous and affected in the Display of his Learning; tho' the Dignity and Majesty of his Subject, which he wonderfully supports, as he is supported by it, excites in you a venerable Awe and Reverence to all he says.

[k] Ann. 3. 75. [l] *Ibid.* 4. 9.

CHAP. II.

NEXT to this Affectation of dabling in Antiquity, one may preſume to call *Tacitus*'s Deſcription in Queſtion; as being over-labour'd, unnatural, and ſometimes even mean. He is too ambitious of Pomp and Ornament; yet the Reader is unaffected, notwithſtanding all the Pains and ſtudied Expreſſion of the Writer. What *Tacitus* ſets off with moſt Oſtentation is leaſt natural, juſt, or true; like the Encomium of *Germanicus* by *Tiberius:* And what he ſays as it were *en paſſant*, with his natural Brevity and Energy, is in ſome Reſpects like the ſame *Tiberius*'s Praiſe of *Druſus*, moſt ſincere, and conſequently affecting. His Grandeur is frequently romantic. He deſcribes not as Things really are, but gives them undue Proportions, and annexes unnatural Circumſtances, to ſtrike and amaze the more. He leaves Nothing to the Reader to imagine. All is enlarg'd and magnified even beyond the Bounds of Nature and Decency. Whether he deſcribes the Works of Art, or the Products of Nature, Actions, Paſſions, or Perſons, they muſt have ſomething ſtrange or great to command more Notice, and raiſe the Merit of our Author's Writings.

If

If a Tempeſt is deſcribed, it is ſuch a one as never happen'd before [m]: —At no Time elſe did Thunder roar, or Lightning ſhoot with ſuch Fierceneſs and Frequency [n]. If it is an Earthquake, there is *non ſolitum in tali Caſu Effugium* [o]. Is it a Froſt? It is ſuch a one as is not often heard of, and deſcrib'd by *Sentry*'s dying, Limbs utterly ſhriveld, and Hands dropping off by the raging Cold [p]. Is it a Fire? It waſtes and deſtroys *ultra ſolitum* [q]. —And in another Place, it is *omnibus quæ huic Urbi per violentiam ignis acciderunt, gravior atque atrocior* [r]. If it is an Attack, as that of *Cremona*, it is a Taſk new and immenſe [ſ]. Does the *Tiber* overflow? It is *immenſo Auctu* [t]. The *Euphrates in immenſum tollitur* [u]. The Rhine empties itſelf into the Ocean *immenſo ore* [w].

As a Specimen of our Author's Deſcription, I ſhall here give the Reader a Tempeſt of his Drawing, as tranſlated by Mr. *Gordon*, who, it muſt be allow'd, has here done his Author Juſtice.

" The Sea at firſt was ſerene; no Sound or " Agitation but from the Oars or Sails of a

[m] Ann. 2. 23. [n] *Ibid.* 15. 45. [o] *Ibid.* 2. 47.
[p] *Ibid.* 13. 35. [q] *Ibid.* 4. 64. [r] *Ibid.* 15. 38.
[ſ] Hiſt. 3. 24. [t] *Ibid.* 1. 86. [u] Ann. 6. 36.
[w] *Ibid.* 2. 6.

" thouſand Ships; but ſuddenly a black Hoſt
" of Clouds pour'd a Storm of Hail; furious
" Winds roar'd on every Side, and the Tem-
" peſt darken'd the Deep, ſo that all Proſpect
" was loſt; and it was impoſſible to ſteer: The
" Soldiers too, unaccuſtom'd to the Terrors of
" the Seas, in the Hurry of Fear diſorder'd the
" Mariners, or interrupted the ſkilful by un-
" ſkilful Help: at laſt the South Wind maſter-
" ing all the reſt, drove the Ocean and the
" Sky: The Tempeſt deriv'd new Force from
" the windy Mountains and ſwelling Rivers of
" *Germany*, as well as from an immenſe Train
" of Clouds, and contracting withal freſh Vi-
" gour from the boiſterous Neighbourhood of
" the North, it hurl'd the Ships, and toſs'd
" them into the open Ocean, or againſt Iſlands
" ſhor'd with Rocks, or dangerouſly beſet with
" cover'd Shoals. The Ships by Degrees with
" great Labour and the Change of the Tide
" were reliev'd from the Rocks and Sands, but
" remain'd at the Mercy of the Winds: Their
" Anchors could not hold them: They were
" full of Water, nor could all the Pumps diſ-
" charge it: Hence to lighten and raiſe the Veſ-
" ſels ſwallowing at their Decks the invading
" Waves, the Horſes, Beaſts, Baggage, and
" even the Arms were caſt into the Deep.

By

" By how much the *German* Ocean is more " outragious than the reſt of the Sea, and the " *German* Climate excells in Rigour, by ſo " much this Ruin was reckon'd to exceed in " Greatneſs and Novelty. They were en- " gag'd in a tempeſtuous Sea, believ'd Deep " without Bottom, vaſt without Bounds, or no " Shores near but hoſtile Shores: Part of the " Fleet was ſwallowed up: Many were driven " upon remote Iſlands void of human Culture, " where the Men periſh'd through Famine, " or were kept alive by the Carcaſſes of Horſes " caſt in by the Flood: Only the Galley of *Ger-* " *manicus* landed upon the Coaſt of the *Chau-* " *cians*, where wandering ſadly, Day and " Night, upon the Rocks and prominent " Shores, and inceſſantly accuſing himſelf as " the Author of ſuch mighty Deſtruction, he " was hardly reſtrain'd by his Friends from " caſting himſelf deſperately into the ſame hoſ- " tile Floods. At laſt with the returning Tide, " and an aſſiſting Gale, the Ships began to re- " turn, all maim'd, almoſt deſtitute of Oars, " or with Coats ſpread for Sails, and ſome " utterly diſabled, were dragg'd by thoſe that " were leſs." The Men glean'd up after the Wreck, recounted Wonders at their Return, " the Impetuoſity of Whirlwinds: Wonderful

" Birds: Sea-monſters of ambiguous Forms be-
" tween Man and Beaſts" *viſa*, adds the Annaliſt, *ſive ex Metu credita*[x]: Upon which laſt Words *Lipſius notes, imo nec viſa, nec credita, ſed vanitate efficta.*

How ſimple and unadorn'd is the Scripture Style upon ſuch an Occaſion as this? " But as
" they ſailed, they fell aſleep: And there came
" down a Storm of Wind on the Lake, and
" they were filled with Water and were in
" Jeopardy[y]." I would further refer the Reader to the Shipwreck of St. *Paul*, as deſcribed by St. *Luke*[z]: By the Juſtneſs and Sincerity of which he will diſcern the falſe Sublime and extravagant Manner of our Annaliſt.

Nor can I think *Tacitus* more juſt and temperate in his Deſcription of Perſons and Paſſions, than of Things. *Agrippina* is *ingens animi: Civilis* is *ingens rerum: Bardanes* is *ingens Gloria: Corbulo* is *ingens Corpore & verbis magnificus: Oſtorius* is *ingenti Corporis Robore. Antiochus* is *opibus ingens*[a]; where *Lipſius*, out of Ignorance, as it ſhould ſeem, of our Author's manner, would raſe *ingens* out of the Text. *Vitellius*'s Soldiers are deſcrib'd *ingentibus telis horrentes:* So *Civilis*'s Troops *immenſis Corporibus & prælongis haſtis:* The Friends

[x] An. 2. 21. 2.
[y] *See* Luke 23. Matt. 8. 24. Mark 4. 37.
[z] Acts 27.
[a] Hiſt. 2. 81.

of

of *Vitellius* in order to defend *Placentia* prepare *immenſas Lapidum Æriſque Moles*[b]. Of thoſe that had been impriſon'd and were executed on the Score of *Sejanus*'s Friendſhip, there lay, ſays the Author, *immenſa Strages*. Now this immenſe Havock or Carnage, according to *Suetonius*, conſiſted of Twenty. *Viginti uno die abjecti tractique*[c].

Here *Lipſius* imagining his Author's poetic Figures to be no more than pure hiſtoric Truth, in order to confirm his *immenſa Strages*, alters the Text of *Suetonius*, and without the Authority of one manuſcript or printed Copy ſubſtitutes a Thouſand in the Room of Twenty.

Tacitus would ſurprize you with the Wonderful; but often ſhocks you with the Improbable. He would aſtoniſh you with the Terrible, but you ſmile at the ſounding Abſurdity. He is always aiming at the Extraordinary, which frequently proves Extravagant. He would raiſe Mole-Hills into Mountains, and Mobs into Rebellions. Every Wind muſt be a Tempeſt; and Skirmiſhes he calls Battles. The Impudence of a Slave, or the Devaſtations of a Robber muſt threaten a Revolution in the State. Numbers are magnified, and Difficulties aggravated, to dignify his Battles and

[b] Hiſt. 2. 21. [c] *Sueton. Tiber.* c. 61.

ennoble

ennoble his Victories. If a Band of Free-booters is but defeated, the Soldiers muſt return *cover'd with Glory*[d]. Again, the *Romans* croſſing the River *Panda*, beſiege the City of *Uſpes* ſituated upon a Hill, and fortified with Walls and Trenches, or Moats. Dreadful City, and mighty Undertaking! for the Author adds, that theſe Walls were rais'd " of Rowes of Hurdles " with Earth between." Yet the taking of this paltry Place with the promiſcuous Butchery of the miſerable Inhabitants, is repreſented in moſt magnificent and pompous Colours; " as ſtriking Terrour into the neighbouring " Nations, who now believ'd that Nothing " could be ſecure or impregnable againſt the " Romans; *ſince Arms and Bulwarks, " Heights and Faſtneſſes, deep Rivers and " fortified Towns were with equal Bravery " vanquiſh'd by them*[e]." Upon *Zorcines* King of the *Soraci* (a wandering People, according to *Strabo*, living in Tents and employ'd in Agriculture) proſtrating himſelf before the Image of *Claudius*, *ſignal*, we are told, *was the Glory of the* Roman *Army*; " who had " advanc'd in a Courſe of Victory without " Blood within three Days Journey of the " River *Tanais*[f]." Now was not this a

[d] Ann. 12. 37. [e] *Ibid.* 12. 16. [f] *Ibid.* 12. 15.

Journey,

Journey, or at beſt a March, rather than a Campaign? Thus again, after taking the City of *Rome* by the Soldiers of *Veſpaſian*, there remain'd the Camp to be attack'd; which ſurely could make no mighty Defence after the City was taken Sword in Hand, the Bulk of *Vitellius*'s ſhatter'd Party rooted, and himſelf fled: Yet all the Inventions uſed in attacking the ſtrongeſt Cities muſt be apply'd, the military Shell, miſſive Engines, Mounds and flaming Torches[g]. "In this ſingle Undertak-" ing, they all cry'd, would be compleated, " whatever Hardſhips, whatever Perils they " had in ſo many Battles undergone. To the " Senate and People their City was reſtored, " to the Deities their Temples: It was in the " Camp that the peculiar Lot and Glory of " the Soldiery reſided: This was their Coun-" try, here their Houſehold and their Houſe-" hold-Goods: Theſe they were now inſtantly " to regain, or paſs the Night under Arms". Publick Sentiments and ſpirited Reſolutions to come from the ſame Men, who immediately before are deſcribed as indulging in luxurious Bathings and Feats of Riot: —— As unconcern'd and enjoying a Security perfectly inhu-

[g] Hiſt. 3. 84.

man,

man, nor for a ſingle Moment poſtponing their Purſuits of Pleaſure!

When *Agrippina* leaves the Army, what a diſmal Affair does the Annaliſt make of it? *Multo cum fletu muliebre & miſerabile Agmen—lamentantes conjuges—velut in Urbe victa facies gemituſque ac planctus*[h]. Now might not we aſk in the Words of *Tacitus*, *Quis ille flebilis Sonus? Quid tam triſte?* Why truly this Affair in the main, this tragical, ſuper-tragical Buſineſs is real Matter of Joy; *Agrippina* is delivered from an Army mutinous, and Violaters of every human Law.

The Paſſions in *Tacitus* are generally carried on to an Exceſs. Whether 'tis Joy or Sorrow, all is in Extremes, and rarely confin'd to what Nature beſt loves, Mediocrity. Anger is Madneſs: Fear is Conſternation, Paleneſs Trembling and Floods of Tears: Courage is *Ferocia & Ardor*. *Germanicus* is one while for Stabbing, another for Drowning himſelf: *Agrippina* is violent in her Grief, and a Stranger to Patience: *Nero* is, *ut Lætitiæ ita Mœroris immodicus*. *Pomponia Græcina* changes not her Weeds or mournful Spirit for forty Years together[i]. *Lipſius* ſaw ſomething extraordinary in this; and ſo without any Authority cuts ſhort

[h] Ann. 1. 40. [i] *Ibid.* 13. 32.

the

the Term, ſubſtituting *quatuordecim Annos* for *quadraginta.*

When our Author would aſcribe the Sycophancy paid to *Sejanus*, we have the People and Nobles of *Rome*, (*eques*, *patres*, *magna pars plebis)* making their Addreſſes on the Shore of *Campania:* Noble and ignoble all in a Body, lying along on the Fields and Shores, Day and Nights, no Diſtinction of Ranks, the Buſineſs all the ſame, and bearing with equal Patience the Favour and Inſults of his Porters, till they were at laſt forbid even to apply to them [k].

To deſcribe the Fear of the *Roman* People upon *Sabinus*'s being led to Execution, we are told, that whereſoever he turn'd his Eyes, whitherſoever he directed his Words, nought appear'd but the Effects of univerſal Terror, *viz.* Flight and Solitude: All along as he paſs'd the People diſappear'd, the Streets were empty, the publick Places deſerted: There were ſome, who, having fled return'd, dreading this very Thing, that they had diſcover'd Dread [l].

Both of theſe Deſcriptions ſeem to have more the Air of poetical Hyperbole, than ſtrict hiſtoric Truth.

[k]. Ann. 4. 74. [l]. *Ibid.* 4. 72.

The

The Death of *Germanicus*, I own, is told movingly enough, if any Thing is amiſs, he ſeems to die too pompouſly. His dying Speech is without Diſpute very fine: But ſeems better fitted for ſome theatrical Heroe quitting the Stage with the moſt labour'd Language and ſtudied Sentiment, to engage the Attention and Applauſe of the Audience.

Upon this and other Occaſions of the ſame kind, which occur in our Author, you naturally think of *Bayes*'s Princeſs *Lardella*, who compoſes a Copy of Verſes juſt as ſhe is dying, to be pinn'd on her Coffin.

Only the firſt part of *Germanicus*'s Speech is a little unmanly, and rather apt to raiſe our Indignation againſt the Gods, than Pity for the Man. *Otho*, the debauch'd, voluptous *Otho*, is repreſented as much more a Man and a Philoſopher upon this laſt and trying Occaſion; and *Cato* himſelf, in the immortal Monument rais'd to his Memory by our Countryman Mr. *Addiſon*, makes not a greater Figure.

When the Fleet appears that bore *Agrippina*, and the Remains of *Germanicus*; inſtantly, ſays the Annaliſt, were fill'd not the Port alone, and adjacent Shores, but the Walls and Roofs as far as the Eye could go, with the ſorrowful Multitude: They were conſulting one from one, how

how they ſhould receive her landing, whether with univerſal Silence, or with ſome Note of Acclamation.

This I cannot help thinking is ſomewhat improper and unnatural. Real Sorrow conſults not Forms: It breaks out into inſtant Expreſſions, and awaits not the cool Deliberation, calm Reaſoning, and Propriety of Action and Decorum, which are all ſuppos'd drown'd in the Tumult of Paſſion.

On the Day, on which the Urn of *Germanicus* was depoſited in the Tomb of *Auguſtus*, the Symptoms of public Grief were now the Vaſtneſs of Silence: Now the Uproar of Lamentation: The City in every Quarter full of Proceſſions: The Field of *Mars* on a Blaze of Torches: Here the Soldiers under Arms, the Magiſtrates without the *Inſignia*, the People by their Tribes, all cried in Concert, that the Common-wealth was fallen. And indeed who could imagine otherwiſe from all this publick Sorrow? Who would not think that a ſecond Battle of *Cannæ* was newly reported, and the Fall of Liberty and Empire in view?

Agrippina landing makes ſuch a Figure, as might naturally be expected from the Stage. 'Tis the Pomp of Sorrow and Oſtentation of of Grief. *Rizpah*'s mournful Conduct for her ſlain

ſlain Sons is expreſs'd in one Verſe of ſacred Writ with more affecting Strokes, than we feel from all this outward Ceremony and detail of Circumſtances, which attend *Agrippina* with her Huſband's Urn. " And *Rizpah* took Sack-" cloth, and ſpread it for her on the Rock, from " the Beginning of Harveſt, until the Water " dropped upon them out of Heaven: And " ſuffered neither the Birds of the Air to reſt " on them by Day, nor the Beaſts of the " Field by Night[m].

Again, the Circumſtance of naming her Son by *Phincah*'s Wife has ſomething in it greater, and at the ſame time Natural, than any Thing ſaid of the Death and Sufferings of our Author's moſt celebrated Perſonages executed by *Nero*; tho' the Writer endeavour'd all in his Power to dignify his Characters, and ennoble their dying Moments. " And about the Time " of her Death, the Women that ſtood by her " ſaid unto her, Fear not; for thou haſt born " a Son. But ſhe anſwered not, neither did ſhe " regard it.—And ſhe nam'd the Child *I-cha-*" *bod*; ſaying, the Glory is departed from " *Iſrael*; becauſe the Ark of God was taken, " and becauſe of her Father-in-Law and her

[m] 2 Sam. 21. 10.

" Huſ-

" band. And she said, the Glory is departed " from *Israel*, for the Ark of God is taken [n]."

To give but one Instance more of the natural Imagery of Sorrow as painted in the Scriptures, how short, yet affecting, is the Conduct and Complaint of *Reuben*, when he found not *Joseph* in the Pit? " He rent his Cloaths, and " returned unto his Brethren, and said, the " Child is not; and I, whether shall I go [o]?

As *Tacitus* thus attempts to raise little Things by a Pomp of Description; so in other Parts of his Works, he would dignify Meanness, and cover the blackest Crimes with the false Colours of Language.

Julia condemned for Adultery is reckoned *inter Adflictos* [p]. The Author speaks rather with Pity for her Sufferings, than Detestation of her Guilt.

When *Silius* desires a speedy Death, *the same Constancy*, adds the Annalist, *possessed several illustrious* Roman *Knights eager for Execution* [q].

A Body of ancient Heroes ready to rush into the thickest Battle, (like the *Grecian* Chiefs when offering themselves to explore the Enemies Camp [r]) or by their Deaths, like *Cocles*,

[n] 1 *Sam.* 4. 20, 21, 2. [o] *Gen.* 37. 29, 30.
[p] Ann. 4. 71. [q] *Il.* 11. 35. [r] Ann. 10.

Curtius, and *Scævola* to deliver their labouring Country. A Martyr with Immortality in his Eye, could not make a greater Figure than this Adulterer-convict with his Pimps and Accomplices.

If *Tacitus* is any where happy in his Deſcription, it is in the Diſplay of guilty Greatneſs. Luxury refined and high-flavoured, Royal Debauch, Imperial Whoredom, ſeem as much adapted to his Pen, as *Livy* is charmed with the virtuous Part, with the amiable Glory of the temperate *Scipio*, or the illuſtrious Poverty of the rural Dictator. Never Writer had a happier Pen at deſcribing Wickedneſs than our Author. It is the moſt natural Part of his Writings. Were we to give Room to the Suſpicions, we ſhall have preſently occaſion to blame in *Tacitus*, we ſhould ſay, he might have been an Adviſer and an Actor in every villainous Deſign, and a Party in every lewd Scene he repreſents.

Meſſalina's guilty Amours with *Silius* are deſcribed with a gay and feſtive Air, with that Pride of Voluptuouſneſs, and feeling Taſte of Pleaſure, as ſhew the Writer well verſed in Court-Intrigues. The Deſcription is too luſcious, and may lead others to a Perpetration of the Crime, rather than an Abhorrence of the Criminals.

Criminals. It may be allowed Natural and Fact, and as such related by the Annalist; but Nature and Fact had better be pass'd over in Silence than debauch the Readers Mind. When Truth is on the Side of Virtue, let it be displayed in its naked Simplicity, or in the fairest and fullest Colours; but such guilty Scenes as *Messalina*'s had better have been for ever buried in Oblivion.

The Story of *Sagitta* and *Pontia* is well told, *i. e.* is told in Language natural enough; but this black Deed, as well as the former, had much better have been concealed from the Eyes of the Reader. And how does this Scene of Adultery and Murder become the Dignity of the *Roman* Nation? Or, is this one of those illustrious Actions which he proposes to make the Subject of his Annals[f]? *Sagitta* was a Tribune of the People, *Pontia* a private Woman: What had this to do with the Publick? If such Transactions as these are worthy of the Historian's Pen, a Sessions-paper may rise to that Dignity.

The Story of *Sabina Poppæa*, which follows in the next Chapter is more agreeable to History, as having some Relation to the Pub-

[f] *Vide* Ann. 13. 31.

lick. *Majorum Reipublicæ malorum initium fuit*, ſays *Tacitus*.

Poppæa's Character, I mean her Perſon is delicately drawn; but in too engaging Colours for corrupted Nature to view with Innocence, at leaſt with Improvement.

Our Author's Conduct is ſomewhat like that of the Painter, who in a Piece I have ſomewhere ſeen, has laid out all his Genius, and employed the utmoſt Efforts of his Art, to adorn *Potipher*'s Wife with all the Charms of Beauty, and bedecked her Bed with every ſoft Elegance, which a luxurious Fancy could imagine proper for a Scene of Dalliance. If there is Guilt, it is in the virtuous Boy, whom (did you not know his Story) you would imagine a Thief, and flying from his Purſuers.

How happy is it, when Genius is employed in the Cauſe of Virtue; when Hiſtory is made a School of Manners, and the Miſtreſs of Temperance? As a Contraſt to our Author's lewd Characters, what a lovely Figure does *Livy*'s *Scipio* make? His Treatment of *Allucio* and the captive Maid, is the moſt gallant and virtuous in the World, and might well gain him the Character of the *God-like* Youth. His Advice to *Maſſaniſſa* needs no Recommendation. Let the rankeſt Debauchee, who has a Grain

Grain of Virtue left, peruse it and condemn it if he can. *Nulla earum Virtus est, qua ego æquè atque temperantia ac continentia Libidinum gloriatus fuerim. Hanc te quoque ad cæteras tuas eximias virtutes, adjecisse velim. Non est, non, (mihi crede) tantum ab hostibus armatis, ætati nostræ periculum, quantum ab circumfusis undique voluptatibus. Qui eas sua temperantia frænavit ac domuit, næ multo majus Decus majoremque victoriam sibi peperit quàm nos Syphace victo habemus* [t].

Had such Treatment of captive Beauty, and such Advice as this to *Massanissa*, come from the bearded Sage, and the gray Severity of Years, we might have suspected it as proceeding from Impotence, or Ill-nature, rather than Self-Denial, or a Love of Fame, or Virtue. But to be sensible of Pleasure, yet unconquered by it, — in the full Bloom of Youth, yet able to controul the Passions, —— a Conqueror, and yet resign the Rights of Conquest, tho' Youth and Beauty were the Prize, and all this Sacrifice for *Rome* and Glory, is such an Instance of exalted Virtue, as has not been often equalled [u].

[t] *Liv.* L. 30. c. 14.

[u] I am not unaware that a Man of modern Gallantry will set very light by this Virtue of Chastity; and willing to expunge it from his System of Morals, or to recommend the

Here again I am reminded of the Scripture Hero *Joſeph:* But muſt own I think the Virtue of *Scipio* more illuſtrious. *Joſeph* could not have gratified his Miſtreſs's Paſſion without tranſgreſſing the Laws of both God and Man, and without Danger of incurring the Diſpleaſure and Vengeance of both; but *Scipio* had not thoſe Reſtraints of Conſcience, or the Fear

theViolation of it with a better Grace to Chriſtian Princes, may deny its Exiſtence or Reputation among the ancient Heathens. The Virtue of *Scipio* celebrated in this Inſtance, has particularly been attempted to be traduced by a noble Author upon the Authority of a Fragment of *Antias Valerias.* But (without conſidering how far modern Manners may miſguide us in our Searches after moral Truth and Virtue) is it probable that *Livy*, who 'tis plain had carefully ſtudied and compared the older *Roman* Hiſtorians, ſhould be ſo ignorant, or ſo wilfully blind to Truth as to forge this Part of *Scipio*'s Conduct; and forge it againſt the expreſs Teſtimony of other credible Hiſtorians extant in his Time? Such a Suppoſition would not only deſtroy his Credit with Reſpect to *Scipio*'s Character throughout, but the Characters of his other Actors. It is well, however, that *Polybius* (L. 10.) ſupports our Author in this, as in many other of his Relations. As for the Authority of *Antias Valerias*, it was ſo little deſerving to be quoted on this Occaſion, that *Livy* has not thought it worth mentioning, though he had in the Chapter immediately preceding, cited him, which he does frequently, as a Writer diſtinguiſhed for his Lies and Credulity. *Vide* Liv. Vol. 4. p. 57, 70, 78, 181, 204. Vol. 3. p. 245. Vol. 5. p. 213, 24, 39, &c. &c. *Ed. Oxon.*

of

of human Laws to bind him: The Captive was the Conqueror's Right [w].

But that I may not ſeem on this Occaſion to ſet too high a Value on the *Roman* Story, or to prefer profane before ſacred Writ, I am obliged to add, that I think the Hiſtory of *Joſeph* taken together far exceeding every Thing of the hiſtoric Kind in *Grecian* or *Roman* Literature. It is impoſſible for a Heart not dead to the moſt natural Impreſſions of Humanity to read this Story without a melting Tenderneſs. *Joſeph is ſtill alive* in this inimitable Draught of human Nature and human Manners. The Compoſition is without Art or Ornament, it is plain Fact and Nature, with which we are yet more moved, than with all that Parade of Grief, that laboured Extravagance of Deſcription, that Pride of Wit, and Enumeration of Ceremony and Circumſtance, which our Anna-

[w] Since the above was writ, a learned Friend upon the Peruſal has hinted to me the oſtentatious Part that *Scipio* ſometimes acted: *Non veris tantum Virtutibus mirabilis, ſed Arte quoque quadam ab Juventa in Oſtentationem, earum compoſitus*, Liv. L. 26. 19. which I find confirmed by *Polybius* in this Inſtance of his Conduct; ſo that when I conſider and compare with it the honourable and conſcientious Part of the Patriarch, the Sollicitations of his Miſtreſs, and the Privacy with which, to all human Appearance, he might have perpetrated the Crime, I am afraid to ſtand to the Preference I have given above to the virtuous *Roman*.

liſt would have employed upon ſuch an Occaſion, to work upon the Paſſions of his Reader. I may be forgiven while I dwell a Moment longer on this ſhort Hiſtory.

Joſeph's cruel Treatment by his Brethren and *Potipher*'s Wife raiſes our Indignation and Pity; as his youthful Wiſdom and filial Piety had before gained our Favour and good Wiſhes. His Impriſonment, and the chief Butler's Forgetfulneſs of his friendly Interpreter make us angry and impatient; as his Deliverance and Exaltation give us Satisfaction and Triumph of Heart. His affected Cruelty to his Brethren, interrupted by his Sorrow for the Perplexity he ſaw them in from the Conſciouſneſs of their Guilt, gives us the pleaſing Image of imaginary Juſtice againſt intended Wickedneſs, while the Tenderneſs of the Judge, not able to go through the Sentence againſt the Criminals, without Tears for the Agony of Brothers, melts us down into Compaſſion and Pity. His flying from the Eyes of Men to throw off the Load of Tenderneſs, that overwhelmed him at the Sight of his Brother *Benjamin*, quite unmans us; we are no more ourſelves, nor able to confine that Exceſs of Tenderneſs which hurries us away to lament with *Joſeph* in his Chamber.

Judah's

Judah's Addreſs to *Joſeph* in Behalf of *Benjamin* is made up of the tendereſt Strokes to move Pity and conciliate Favour. " What " ſhall we ſay unto my Lord? or, What ſhall " we ſpeak? or how ſhall we clear ourſelves?" expreſs the laſt Diſtreſs and Confuſion. The Mention of *Iſrael* his Father, under the Character of *an old Man*, and of *Benjamin*, *as the Child of his old Age — a little one*, *whoſe Brother was dead*, *who was left alone of his Mother*, *whom his Father loved — and who*, *if he ſhould leave his Father*, *his Father would die* — is a Recapitulation of ſuch Circumſtances, as muſt pierce through the Formalities of Greatneſs, make an Emperor forget his Royalty, and remember himſelf a Man, concerned in ſome of theſe Relations.

Joſeph's burſting into Tears from a Fullneſs of Heart, before he could make that ſhort, but comprehenſive and ſtriking Declaration, I am *Joſeph*; followed by that natural and familiar Queſtion, " Doth my Father yet live?" The guilty and diſtracted Silence of his Brethren, ſtruck Dumb by this Diſcovery as by ſome ſudden Terror, or Bolt from Heaven; his familiar and endearing Approach to them, aſcribing their Treatment of him to the Direction of Providence; — his filial Concern

for

for *Israel*, and honeſt Pride in the imagined Happineſs of a Father from a Son's Glory; —— his Weeping upon *Benjamin*'s Neck, and *Benjamin*'s weeping upon his Neck, are all told in ſuch lively Colours, as were never equall'd by any human Compoſition. The deepeſt Scene I have met with in Tragedy, never affected me ſo much as this plain proſe Narration and Recital of pure Fact in the ſacred Penman. It ſhakes your whole Frame; and he that can read it without Emotion is a Monſter, not a Man.

But to return to our Author's Deſcription. As the royal Exceſſes of *Nero* are well deſcribed, the Relation joyous, and a gay thoughtleſs Madneſs could not be better painted; ſo the Horror of a guilty Soul is (allowing for a little poetical Hyperbole) repreſented with true Sublimity in his retiring to *Naples* from the Proſpect of that deadly Sea, and thoſe tragical Shores, which had been Witneſſes to his Mother's Murder, and which inceſſantly reproach'd him. "Beſides that, there were thoſe (ſays "the Annaliſt) who believed, that from the "high Cliffs and Hills round about were "uſually heard the ſhrill Sound of Trumpets, "and Shrieks and Wailings from *Agrippina*'s "Grave.[x]"

[x] Ann. 14. 10.

How

How wonderfully ſublime is this in the Senſe in which I ſuppoſe it is to be taken! The diſmal Proſpect of the Sea and Shore was in *Nero*'s Soul. Guilt blackened all about him, and formed the Trumpet among the Hills, and the Shrieks heard from his Mother's Tomb.

Beſides theſe poetic Liberties, and an affected Grandeur, which give the Writings of *Tacitus* too much the Air of a Romance, and perhaps got him the Title given him by ſome of his Admirers of *Romanorum magnificentiſſimus*, there are other Faults I cannot but cenſure in his Deſcriptions; their being too *General*, and yet too *Particular*; which may at firſt Sight appear inconſiſtent, but, I believe will, upon Examination be found true.

Sir *H. Savil* has more than once charged our Author with Negligence in his Deſcriptions; but I rather think his Fault or his Misfortune was Ignorance. He is *General* for want of knowing the real Circumſtances of many an Action he relates, as Battle, Siege or Aſſault; and ſo is obliged to make up the Deſcription with ſuch Circumſtances as generally enter into ſuch an Action. If it is a Deluge, Fire, Peſtilence or Shipwreck that is the Subject, he goes at large into whatever may be ſuppoſed to make up ſuch a Scene in its worſt

Appear-

Appearance, without confining himſelf to the particular Miſery and Loſs of the preſent Misfortune.

For inſtance, if it is a Battle, we are told they fought *cominus eminuſque —— collato gradu, corporibus umbonibuſque niti, omiſſo pilorum jactu, gladiis & ſecuribus, galeas loricaſque perrumpere, noſcentes inter ſe, cæteris conſpicui —— in Eventum belli certabant.* I deſire the *Engliſh* Reader to conſider how ſuch a Deſcription would ſound in the Hiſtory of our own Country. " They fought Hand to " Hand, and at a Diſtance — now cloſe Body " to Body, and Shield to Shield, now laying " aſide Fire-arms, with Swords and Pikes, " known to each other, and conſpicuous to " the Reſt — and all for the Victory," I refer the Reader further to a Battle between the *Parthians* and the *Sarmatæ*, *Ann.* 6. 35, *&c.*

If the Reader would ſee the Impropriety of ſuch general Deſcriptions, let him peruſe any of *Cæſar*'s Battles as deſcribed by himſelf, or one of our own unhappy civil Engagements as deſcribed by the Lord *Clarendon.* I refer him to the Battle of *Pharſalia* in the firſt, and the Battle of *Edge-Hill*, with the ſecond Battle of *Newbury* in the latter.

Again,

Again, the Attack of *Placentia* by *Cæcina* [y], I think faulty for the ſame Reaſon; and to juſtify my Sentiments deſire the Reader to compare it with the Attack of *Briſtol*, as related by the Lord *Clarendon*, and the Siege of *Marſeilles* in *Cæſar*.

For the Deſcription of a Peſtilence, of a Battle by Night, and another in Moraſs and flooded Grounds: I refer the Reader to *Ann.* 16. 11. *Hiſt.* L. 4. c. 27. and 15. where he will find ſuch general Circumſtances related, as uſually attend ſuch Actions or Calamities; and which any one might almoſt deſcribe as well, that knew no other Circumſtance but that there was a Peſtilence, a Battle by Night, or an Engagement in a Moraſs.

It is difficult to make Fiction look like Truth, or to invent naturally. Affected and pompous Deſcriptions are apt to raiſe Suſpicions of an Author's Sincerity. "All un-"adorn'd Narratives (ſays a great Judge) which "have nothing to ſurprize, may be thought "to carry ſome Preſumption of Veracity [z]." The amiable and illuſtrious Author of *Telemachus*, having not Truth for his Foundation, it may be eaſily obſerved how his Deſcription labours. Imitations of the ancients,

[y] Hiſt. L. 2. 72. [z] Analogy of Religion. Part 2. 7.

poetic

poetic Images and hyperbolical Exaggerations ſupply the Place of Fact. This is not alledg'd againſt the great Author, as abuſing his Readear ; his Work, I mean the hiſtorical Part, not being impos'd upon the World for Truth, but profeſſedly writ upon the Plan of Fable. Obſerve then his Deſcription of a Battle. " The " Horizon look'd ruddy with the Sun's earlieſt " Rays, and the Sea was brighten'd with the " Flames of the riſing Day. All the Coaſt " was fill'd with Men, Arms, Horſes, and " Chariots ; which being in Motion made a " confuſed Noiſe like that of the angry " Waves —— And now *Mars* begun by the " Noiſe of Arms and the terrible Preparations " of War to diſſeminate Rage in every Heart. " The Field was crowded with briſtling Pikes " thick ſet like a Crop of Corn.—There ſoon " aroſe a Cloud of Duſt, which intercepted both " Heaven and Earth from the Eyes of Men : " Darkneſs, Horror, Bloodſhed and inexora- " ble Death advanc'd apace.——Then follow- " ed a thick Cloud of Javelins, and Arrows, " darken'd the Air, and covered all the Com- " batants. Nothing could be heard but the " doleful Cries of expiring Mortals, and the " Clattering of Arms of thoſe that fell in the " Conflict. The Earth groan'd beneath the

" large

" large Heaps of dead Bodies: Streams of
" Blood ran guttering down on every Side.
" There appear'd no longer among this con-
" fus'd Medley of enraged and blood-thirſty
" Men, any thing but Slaughter, Revenge,
" Deſpair and brutal Fury [a]."

This I think is pretty much in our Author's manner. Thus in the Tempeſt before quoted, you find every Circumſtance that generally concurrs to render this Scene of Miſery as terrible as poſſible.

I deny not the Truth of the Facts in general, *viz.* That there was a Battle, a Tempeſt, an Attack of this or that fortified City: Or, that the Event upon the whole prov'd otherwiſe than the Author aſſerts; but the Particulars of the Action, or Manner of bringing it to the End or Event, appear to have been much unknown to him.

In his Characters I think *Tacitus* is equally faulty. If he introduces an Informer or a Traytor, he is ſuch a one as might be found in any State, at any Time. The Author copies from Nature in general, and what ſhe dictates in a common Way; not marking that Peculiarity, which may and often does diſtinguiſh Perſons of the ſame Character at

[a] *Telemach.* B. 20.

different

different Times and upon different Occaſions. He deſcribes Avarice and Ambition according to their general Symptoms, Marks and Operations; not the particular Conduct and Character of him who is avaricious and proud. His Manners are often poetically juſt and ſomewhat too uniform for the Hiſtory of Fact and human Nature. The ſame Regularity cannot be expected in the Moral as in the Natural World.

After what is here objected to *Tacitus* as being too *General*, it may be wondered how we can accuſe him of being too *Particular*. But the Particularity cenſured is not that juſt Relation of the Particulars of any Action, which commonly diſtinguiſh it from any other Action of the ſame Kind; but the tagging ſome little Circumſtance to the Tail of a general Deſcription, which is intended by the Author to aggravate the Horror or aggrandize the Pomp of it, which really does but diſgrace it.

Thus to expreſs the Greatneſs of the Victory gained over, and the Slaughter made of the *Britains* under *Boadicea* by the *Romans* under *Suetonius*: "Such, we are told, was the Fu-
"ry of the Soldiers, that they ſpared not even
"the Lives of Women; nay, the very Beaſts
"eſcaped

" eſcaped not; they were pierced with Darts, " and ſerved to ſwell the mighty Heaps of the " Dead[b]."

Thus after a general Deſcription of the Miſery occaſioned by the Fall of the Amphitheatre at *Fidenæ*[c], the Annaliſt adds, " that there " was a frequent Contention about the Pro- " perty of the Dead, where the Features were " diſtorted by Death or Bruiſes, or where Pa- " rity of Age, or Reſemblance of Perſon had " confounded the Slain, and led into Miſtakes " their ſeveral Claimers."

I am not ignorant of the Regard paid by the Heathen to their Dead, and the Care they had of their Funerals, yet I cannot but think this too low a Circumſtance, and detracting from that general Horror, Conſternation and Pity that ſtrikes us upon hearing of fifty-thouſand Souls at once, maimed or ſlain.

How ſimple and unaffected is the ſcripture Account of *Sampſon*'s pulling down the Houſe or Temple of *Dagon* upon himſelf and the *Philiſtines*? And *Samſon* ſaid, " Let me die " with the *Philiſtines?* and he bowed himſelf " with all his Might, and the Houſe fell upon " the Lords and upon all the People that were " therein: So the Dead which he ſlew at his

[b] Ann. 14. 37. [c] *Ibid.* 4. 62.

" Death, were more than they which he ſlew " in his Life[d]." And how aſtoniſhing is the imagined Miſery as deſcribed by *Milton!*

Man. ——————— *O what Noiſe!*
Mercy of Heaven, what hideous Noiſe was that,
Horribly loud, unlike the former Shout!

Chor. *Noiſe call you it, or univerſal Groan,*
As if the whole Inhabitation periſh'd?
Blood, Death, and dealthful Deeds are in that Noiſe,
Ruin, Deſtruction at the utmoſt Point.
Samſ. Agoniſt.

It is ſaid indeed, " That *Samſon*'s Brethren " and all the Houſe of his Father came down " and brought him up and buried him be- " tween *Zorah* and *Eſhtaol* in the burying " Place of *Manoah* his Father." But here it ought to be obſerved, that *Samſon* was the Hero of the Action, and a Prince of his People, and as the ſacred Writer with the utmoſt Propriety here adds, " had judged *Iſrael* twenty " Years."

After the general Defeat given the *Germans* by *Germanicus*, ſome of the Enemy are deſcri-

[d] *Judg.* 16. 30.

bed

bed as hiding themselves in the Tops of Trees, who were shot by the Archers in Sport, or crushed by the Fall of the Trees[e].

These I think are too trifling Circumstances, and diminish rather than augment the Glory of this great Victory; *(magna ea Victoria)*

How much more elegant and raised is the sacred Account of the Battle in the Wood of *Ephraim*; where instead of any boyish Particulars, it is only said, "That the Wood de-"voured more People that Day than the Sword "devoured[f]." *Joab*'s thrusting *Absalom* thro' the Heart with three Darts, while he was yet alive in the Oak, is much different from the Particularity censured in *Tacitus*. Here it was the General on one Side, the Cause and chief Support of the War, and by whose Death it was ended, and of whom it was therefore proper to give an Account.

Again, upon the Desolation made by an uncommon Inundation of the *Tiber*, I think it is a lessening, though it might be a true Circumstance, "That very many were catched in "their Beds and in their Shops by it[g]." And I dare say, few Writers who had been Eye-witnesses to the general Desolation made by such

[e] Ann. 2. 17. [f] 2 *Sam.* 18. 8. [g] Hist. 1. 86.

an uncommon Calimity would have deſcribed it by ſuch Circumſtances.

Our Author's Conduct in this Reſpect reminds me of a Paragraph that lately appear'd in one of the Foreign Journals, deſcribing the Violence of a Hurricane; "which, (if I re- "member the Words aright) ſhatter'd Moun- "tains, tore up Oaks by the Roots, and car- "ried them through the Air to a great Diſ- "tance, diſmantled Churches, laid Villages "deſolate, and overturn'd a Hayſtack."

As the Paſſions in our Author, it has been before obſerv'd, are ſomewhat extravagant, and his Characters extraordinary; ſo there is beſides an affected Perverſeneſs and ſtudied Inconſiſtency in them. A common Courſe or regular Proceſs in the moral or natural World, is too low a Subject for *Tacitus:* His Deſign is to aſtoniſh; and therefore his Characters muſt have ſomething of the Miraculous in them, as well as his Deſcriptions.

With great Uprightneſs and popular Favour *Vitellius* ruled *Africk* as Proconſul: *Veſpaſian* under the ſame Character govern'd with Ignimony and public Hate. From hence our Allies, ſays *Tacitus*, made their Conjectures (as indeed every Body elſe would) concerning the Reign

Reign of each: *Sed Experimentum contra fuit* [h].

There is ſtill a greater Inconſiſtency in *Tacitus*'s Character of *Veſpaſian*. *Africa* declared againſt him from the Experience they had had of his ill Conduct. Yet when he ruled in *Britain*, it ſhould ſeem, he behaved differently; for they declared for him againſt *Vitellius*: *inclitus erga Veſpaſianum favor apud Britannos* [i].

If *Suetonius* may be believ'd, *Veſpaſian*'s Conduct was more uniform: "Obtaining the Pro-" vince of *Africa*, he govern'd with great In-" tegrity, and was treated with extraordinary " Veneration and Honour [k]."

Otho was in a private Station an unbridled Voluptuary, but when in Authority obſervant of Gravity and juſt Reſtraints, and a hardy General: He died to Fame, who had lived a Debauchee; died like a Martyr, who had liv'd a Pathick [l].

What a Contrariety have we in the Conduct and Character of *Titus Vinius*, firſt accuſed of being guilty of Adultery in the very Quarters ſacred to the *Roman Eagles* with the General's Wife, and thrown into Irons for it; then diſ-

[h] Hiſt. 2. 27. [i] *Ibid.* 3. 44. [k] *Veſpaſ.* c. 4. [l] Ann. 13. 46.

charg'd, not from the Conviction of his Innocence, but by the Change of the Times; and paſſing through a Succeſſion of publick Employments with a Character free from Reproach? He commands a Legion, and acquits himſelf with Applauſe. After this he is charged with ſtealing a golden Goblet at *Claudius*'s Table. Yet this ſame *Vinius* rules the Province of *Narbon Gaul* as Proconſul, with Juſtice unbiaſs'd and eminent Integrity [m].

Thus again "*Cornelius Fuſcus* of noble "Race in the Bloom of Youth, had laid aſide "the Rank of Senator from a Love of Eaſe "and Solitude [n]." Who would not expect from this Beginning a ſecond *Atticus*? But in the ſame Chapter he is repreſented as joining the Party of *Veſpaſian* (which muſt tend to rend the Commonwealth into Faction and Diſcord) as adding to the Flames of War the moſt furious Fuel, and delighting not ſo much in the Rewards of Perils, as in Perils themſelves; and to Acquirements long ſince attain'd and ſafely poſſeſs'd, preferring new Purſuits doubtful and dangerous.

The Reader will judge of the Propriety and Conſiſtency of ſuch a Conduct, by comparing

[m] Hiſt. 1. 48. [n] *Ibid.* 2. 86.

it

it with that of the Earl of *Newcastle* as drawn by the masterly Pen of Lord *Clarendon*.

Grotius saw the Inconsistency of this Character of *Corn. Fuscus*, and cries out, *Non sane quieti hic homo ingenij:* And so attempts to reconcile our Author by an arbitrary Alteration of the Text: Whereas *Tacitus* expected Admiration here, and not Correction.

Mithridates is now represented with a Countenance and Dress suited to his miserable Circumstances, throwing himself at the Feet of *Eunones* [o]: But presently after insolent and haughty even in the Presence of the Imperial Majesty of *Rome*; and when in the *Forum* and encompassed with Guards, with a Countenance perfectly undaunted.

Many of *Tacitus*'s Women are Heroes, and his Heroes, Women. *Agrippina* is represented as sacrificing to masculine Ambition all the Passions of her Sex [p]: as urging, "it was "below her Spirit to sink in Time of Danger:" While the General and the Husband *Germanicus*, is represented with Tenderness and many Tears prevailing with her to depart [q]. All her Rage, Resentment and masculine Fury upon the Death of her Husband are unbecoming

[o] Ann. 12. 18. [p] *Ibid.* 6. 25. [q] *Ibid.* 1. 40.

her Circumstances; we rather condemn her Passions than pity her Sorrows.

Piso's Wife *Placina* is not restrain'd by the Decencies of her Sex; but frequents the Exercises of the Cavalry and the Decursions of the Cohorts [r]. *Triaria*, Wife of *L. Vitellius* is *ultra fœminam ferox* [s], *Verulana Gracilia* follows *Sabinus* seizing upon the Capitol in favour of his Brother *Vespasian* against *Vitellius*, *neque liberos neque propinquos, sed bellum secula* [t].

Tacitus's Slaves act with the spirited Ambition of Kings: His Kings with the mean and sordid Spirit of Slaves. Criminals and Malefactors fight like Heroes; and his Heroes tremble like Criminals. Guilt assumes the Confidence of conscious Virtue, and Captives behave with the Insolence of Conquerors.

The Woman and the Captive, *Arminius*'s Wife is represented without Tears or Submission [u]? *Boadicea* is resolv'd to conquer or die: Let the Men live and be Slaves [w]. And in another Place you have a Ligurian Woman superior to the Rack, and even the Agonies of Death.

Tacitus's Whores are least eminent in their own Profession. A Bawd attempts to starve

[r] Ann. 2. 55. [s] Hist. 2. 69. [t] *Ibid.* 3. 69.
[u] Ann. 1. 57. [w] *Ibid.* 14. 35.

the

the *Roman* Empire [x]. *Epicharis*, a Slave and Whore (who till then had never ſhewn any Regard to ought that was worthy or honourable) undergoes the Fury of Stripes, of Fire and Tortures to protect ſuch, to whom ſhe had no Tye of Kindred or Friendſhip, nay, ſuch as ſhe ſcarce knew: While *Lucan*, *Senecio* and *Quinctianus*, Men, Freemen, *Roman* Knights and Senators, betray'd without Exception every the deareſt Pledges they had in Blood and Friendſhip [y].

While his Women are thus repreſented above the Frailties and Tenderneſs of their Sex, his moſt renowned Generals with their Armies, vanquiſh'd and Victors, nay his Emperors are ſenſible of the moſt timorous Paſſions, and very laviſh of their Tears upon moſt Occaſions.

It would be tedious to enlarge upon this Weeping Subject. The Armies are again and again repreſented in Tears: The chief Officers importune their General *Cæcina* with many Tears: *Tiberius* is repreſented *crebris cum lacrymis*: *Valens* and *L. Vitellius* with the Emperor his Brother are all Weepers. *Corbulo* himſelf fears and is appall'd at the receiving an Order tho' from the mean ſpirited *Claudius*. *Otho* fears and trembles: *Oſtorius* the *Roman* Gene-

[x] *Criſpinilla* Hiſt. 2. 73.

[y] Ann. 15. 49. 55.

ral,

ral, tho' ſuperior in Number of Forces to *Caractacus* and his Troops —— yet is amaz'd and affrighted at their Approach [z].

Nay the infamous *Meſſalina*, Adultereſs and Murderer, is repreſented weeping for the Sufferer in the very Act of Murdering him. Upon her Marriage with *Silius*, the Prince's Family is ſeiz'd with Dread and Horror: The Emperor himſelf is ſo confounded and diſpirited, that he asks, "Whether he were yet "Emperor [a]?" And after ſhe is deſerted, and pitied by no Soul living, yet ſtill the Prince trembles.

When *Aggrippina* eſcapes the Wreck intended for her by her Son, *Nero* becomes mortally ſtruck with Agony and Diſmay, *jam jamque affore obteſtans* [b]. *Xiphilin* relates what ſeems more like the Truth, that *Nero* was ſo tranſported with Anger, when he receiv'd the News, that he order'd him that brought it to be put to Death.

As to the Profuſion of Tears, which I may ſay overflow in *Tacitus*, I cannot think it a natural Deſcription or proper Expreſſion of the Manners of Men in this Period of civil Hiſtory. Of old indeed when mere Nature prevailed in the Breaſts of the firſt rude Inhabi-

[z] Hiſt. 3. 31 — 2. 23. Ann. 11. 20, &c.
[a] *Ibid.* 28. 31. [b] *Ibid.* 14. 7.

tants

tants of the Globe, we find the Paſſions bold, urgent and undiſguiſed; and it was no Diſcredit to the Heroes of Antiquity to ſay of them

——— απ' οφρυσι δακρυα λειβον. *Hom.*

But more artificial Manners ſeem to have been in Faſhion in the Times which our Author deſcribes.

As the Paſſions are carried to an Exceſs, and the Change of them is ſomewhat unnatural; ſo I think this Change is ſometimes too ſudden. Men are repreſented this Moment all in an Uproar and Sedition; the next the ſame Men dragging the Seditious to Execution; now ſtriking Terror, and immediately trembling under the Awe of thoſe they before terrified, this Moment outragiouſly inſulting all Authority; the next patiently ſubmitting to the Puniſhment inflicted by it. The ſame Troops are above begging Peace, even when they had dropped all Efforts of War, who immediately after tamely preſent their Perſons and Faces to all Indignities from the Conquerors: Now Men are extravagant in their Joy, then all melted into Tears. The ſame Armies one Day join in Battle againſt each other with implacable Rage, whom you preſently after find uniting in Tears of Joy, deteſting the Lot of civil Arms, and dreſſing each others Wounds. They exclaim againſt the

the Butchery and Parricide attending theſe unnatural Wars; and yet with the ſame Eagerneſs inſtantly proceed to the Commiſſion of theſe Enormities[c].

Thus *Tacitus* is perpetually endeavouring to affect his Reader with Indignation, Pity or Surprize; but then his Study to affect you appears ſo plain, that it defeats his Deſign. His Aim is to make himſelf the moſt conſpicuous Perſonage in the Story; and ſo far he gains his Aim that you never loſe Sight of him; but then it fares with him, as with an affected Beauty, who, not content with the Charms which Nature has given her, calls in the Help of Art to catch all Eyes, and looſes Admirers by too apparent a Paſſion to gain them.

To this Vanity of our Author to diſplay himſelf and amaze his Reader, I aſcribe his Fondneſs for the Miraculous, his mixing natural with civil Hiſtory, his Credulity and Falſehood. As his Deſcriptions are extraordinary, and his Paſſions extravagant; ſo his Lies are egregious ones, and his Prodigies moſt prodigious.

To raiſe Pity for *Germanicus*, the Annaliſt recounts ſome Circumſtances attending his Death, to make us believe he was poiſoned, or

[c] Ann. 1. 44. Hiſt. 2. 45. *Ibid.* 3. 23, &c.

rather

rather bewitched. " Fragments of human Bo-
" dies, the Spoils of the Grave are found upon
" the Walls and Floors with Charms and In-
" cantations, and the Name of *Germanicus*
" graved on Sheets of Lead — Carcaſes half
" burnt beſmeared with Gore and other
" Witch-crafts, by which the Souls of Men
" are doom'd to the infernal Gods[d]."

What is all this, but meer tragical Romance? *perſuaſiones è vulgo & ideo vanæ*, as *Lipſius* freely confeſſes.

In natural Things, if there comes acroſs our Author any Appearance that borders upon the Wonderful, you are ſure to be entertained with it; and not one ſuperſtitious Whimſy, or fabulous Circumſtance attending it, will be omitted.

The Sun-riſing, 'tis true, is no Miracle; but by Way of Pomp, and through the Vanity of Eaſtern Manners, you have the third Legion ſaluting it in the Heat of Action. This Legion, it ſeems, had been quartered in *Syria*; but I think this no ſufficient Reaſon for their adopting the *Syrian* Manners. In the Battle between the *Roman* Army under *Macrinus* and the *Parthians* under *Artabanus*, the Barbarians are repreſented by *Herodian*[e], as worſhipping the Sun with the uſual Ceremonies of

[d] Ann. 2. 69. [e] Lib. 4.

thoſe

thoſe Countries; but not one Word of the *Roman* Army or any Part of it paying this Homage or any Kind of Reſpect to it.

The Manner of gathering Bitumen or Pitch is very extraordinary, as related by our Hiſtorian from ancient Writers [f]. The Fire among the *Inhones* is one of the moſt uncommon that I have met with. It not only ariſes from no common Cauſe, being an Eruption from the Bowels of the Earth, but it is alſo not to be extinguiſh'd in a common Way: "By throwing of "Stones, by Clubs and Blows as in an En-"counter with fierce and ſavage Beaſts, ſays "our poetical Exaggerator, it is quite re-"puls'd [g]."

As to our Author's Monſters half Man and half Beaſt; they might of old be the Mormos of Ignorance and Idolatry; or in latter Times may have made Part of the Entertainment in the Scenical Revels of a gay Court; but ought never to claim a Place in a civiliz'd Hiſtorian as real or natural Beings, and the Objects of hiſtoric Faith.

The Story of the *Phenix* [h] (tho' the *French* Critick *Rapin* calls this a juſt Digreſſion) is quite Romantic; at leaſt impertinent in the *Roman* Story, or indeed in any Story, but the

[f] Hiſt. 5. 6. [g] Ann. 13. 58. [h] *Ibid.* 6. 28.

Hiſtory

Hiſtory of *vulgar Errors:* Yet *Tacitus* introduces the Relation with *a cognitu non abſurda:* tho' he acknowledges at the Concluſion of this Excurſion, *hæc incerta & fabulis aucta. Bochart* and *Pliny* think the whole Story of the Phenix to be juſtly ſuſpected. But allowing it more than an imaginary Exiſtence, this was not the Time of it's Appearance. It is a fabulous Affair, ſays our Author's Defenders, which made him leſs careful in his Calculation. The Truth is, it was a Wonder, ſeen ſometime or other, or at leaſt reported to be ſeen, and recorded by Antiquity, and therefore muſt have a Place in our Author, who is particularly careful in the Relation of it.

Xiphilin juſt mentions this Phenomenon, but in ſuch a way as ſhews the Abſurdity or Impropriety of giving it a Place in his Story. The ſame Year, ſays " he, *if the Affairs of* Egypt " *have any Connexion with thoſe of* Rome, " there appear'd a Phenix in thoſe Parts, which " *ſeemed* to preſage the Death of *Tiberius*, " *who fell very ſick the Year after*[i]."

As for our Author's Stories of the Cypreſs-Tree: — of the *Egyptian* God *Serapis*: — of the *Paphian Venus*: — of the Viſion that ap-

[i] *Xiphilin* by *Manning*, Vol. 1, p. 259.

pear'd

pear'd to *Curtius Rufus* [k] : — believe them who will for me. The Relation of *Hercules*'s Hunting is one of the groſeſt Lies that ever diſgrac'd a Hiſtory : Yet it is told by *Tacitus* as a moſt ſerious Truth [l].

Veſpaſian's Miracles, his healing the Lame, and reſtoring Sight to the Blind, *Tacitus* plainly believes, and would have others do ſo too [m] : As I ſuppoſe he would have us give the ſame Credit to his Account of the *Jews* ; which is ſuch a Heap of abſurd, inconſiſtent, notorious Falſehood, that all that his Defenders can ſay in his Favour, is, " That he " is not the worſt of Liars, but that others " in their Deliriums have raved greater Lies " than he." *Ne tantopere noſter culpetur tanquam mendaciorum pleniſſimus, Scriptor. Et ſane* Strabo, Plutarchus, Democritus *apud ſuidam multo majora Deliria delirarunt* [n].

Yet this is the Writer noted for *Veracity* and *Candour* [o] ; and this the Jewiſh Account (Infidelity bluſh!) ſwallowed by the ſqueamiſh Unbeliever, and quoted by him to confront the Authority of ſacred Writ!

Upon a Review of theſe Obſervations on *Tacitus*'s Deſcription, the Reader will judge,

[k] Hiſt. 2. 78. 3. 4. 83. Ann. 11. 21. [l] *Ibid.* 12, 13. [m] Hiſt. 4. 81. [n] *Lipſ.* in Fac. Hiſt. L. 5. init. [o] Philoſophical Eſſays, p. 192.

whether

whether here is not something composed *Miraculi Causâ*, and whether our Author acts like one, "who holds it unworthy the Gravity of his Subject to collect fabulous Stories, "and to abuse with Fictions the Minds of his "Readers[P]."

[P] Hist. 2. 50.

CHAP. III.

BUT notwithstanding the Pompousness of his Description, and the Miraculous in his Relations, the Excess in his Passions, and the Extravagancy of his Characters, I make no Scruple to assert, that there is a great Deal of Meanness in the Writings of *Tacitus*; tho' I confess his Subject is sometimes in the Fault.

For Want of grander Scenes, he often fills up his Annal with low and trivial Circumstances unbecoming the Majesty of History and the Dignity of the *Roman* People, even in their Decline.

The Impudence of a Slave, or the Dissentions of a Play-house are low Insurrections, if they may deserve that Name, and attended with no Circumstances worth remembring or relating, compared with the Seditions, or rather the just Resentment of the old *Romans*. It was then a Convulsion of the Republick; and such Dignity had those Commotions that we scarce know on which Side stood the Common-wealth.

The Senate are a Tribe of formal Knaves, and dastardly Traitors, ready to compliment their

their Prince with the Lives of every worthy Patriot (if one ventured to breath a free Thought) and to ſanctify every infamous Act, ſo it might but prolong to them the Lives of Slaves and Sycophants. They are a low, diſpirited Body of Men, or ſcarce a Body of Men. When you hear of the Senate met, you can ſcarce conceive of them with the Reſpect due to a Grand Jury, or a Bench of Juſtices. You can ſcarce think of a Pretor or a *Roman* Knight under a higher Character than that of a Country 'Squire or the Mayor of a Corporation.

Here you have a *Porcius Cato*, with others of the ſame high Rank, turning Informers; there three other *Roman* Senators lurking in a Garret, and liſtening through a Chink to betray an honeſt Man: Here the Nobles of *Rome* bearing with Patience the Inſults of *Sejanus*'s Porters; there *Trio* and *Regulus* the Conſuls falling out and ſquabbling like two Pariſh Officers. And indeed the Body of the Senate, had the Motion of *Togonius Gallus* [q] been com-

[q] The Motion was, that the Prince ſhould chooſe a Body of Senators, of whom Twenty drawn by Lot under Arms ſhould wait upon him and defend his Perſon as often as he entered the Senate. *Ann.* 6. 2.

plied with by the Emperor, had made a Figure little better than the *Pretorian* Guards, or ſo many Footmen in the Lobby of the Houſe.

Sometimes, 'tis true, out of an affected Imitation of ancient Manners, we are told of a *Senatus conſultum priſca ſeveritate compoſitum*; But can we forget that 'tis the ſame Senate that are repreſented in the ſame Author *trepidi Patres*, — and *contremuerant Patres?*

When they gripe their Fiſts at *Seriolanus Vocula*, till he is obliged to quit the Houſe, we can ſcarce help conſidering them under any other Character than that of a Set of Bullies, rather than an auguſt Body of *Roman* Senators. Laws paſſed and Authority exerted without Paſſion or perſonal Menaces had better become their Name and Dignity.

Corbulo, the renowned General *Corbulo* complaining of the Badneſs of the Roads, occaſioned by the Negligence of the Overſeers, makes no great Figure in a *Roman* Senate, where I ſuppoſe the Complaint was lodged [r]. If ſuch Tranſactions and ſuch Motions are worth recording, a modern Hiſtory of *England* might be ſoon compiled.

[r] Ann. 3. 31.

Even

Even *Tiberius* with all his profound Wiſdom complaining of the Licentiouſneſs of the Players, ſeems to act much below his Character. The Wantonneſs of a Farce, or the Ill-manners of Punch or Harlequin would not, I ſuppoſe, ſound well from a *Britiſh* Throne, much leſs from the Imperial Majeſty of *Rome*.

His now chiding this Senator, now that, then the whole Body [f], appears not like a King, nor ſo great as a Tyrant, at leaſt not a Tyrant of *Rome*.

His going in a Hurry to the Chamber of *Plautius Silvanus* (who had kill'd his Wife) to examine the Circumſtances with his own Eyes, gives us a very low Idea of a *Roman* Emperor thus diſcharging the Office of a Coroner, or a petty Conſtable.

Thus *Germanicus* in Imitation of *Papirius Curſor* in *Livy*, muſt viſit the wounded Soldiers. *Papirius* is repreſented very naturally as putting his Head into their Tents, aſking them how they do, and giving his Officers a particular Charge of their Cure. *Tacitus* muſt improve upon this; and ſo *Germanicus* is repreſented *Vulnera intuens*; which I think a

[f] Ann. 6. 23.

boyish Circumstance, and rather lessening the Character of the General [t].

Tiberius is an egregious Speaker: Never Prince, says the learned Critick *Rapin*, spoke with more Dignity. Now I cannot help thinking, that, tho' he speaks very finely, and very few that have wore a Crown have said greater or wiser Things, he speaks too often and too long at a Time. He wants the Imperial Brevity. There is more Dignity, State, and of the Royal Character preserved in a few Words of *Shakespear*'s *Julius Cæsar*, than by the most laboured Speeches of *Tiberius*. His Edicts are as common as King *James*'s Proclamations, and often upon as trifling Occasions. *Populumque Edicto monuit: —— utque premeret Vulgi Sermones monuit Edicto:* Thus, if I remember right, King *James* published a Proclamation to forbid the People talking News, *increpuitque per Edictum plebem.* —— *Tum Cæsar populum edicto increpuit*, — are Phrases that frequently occur in *Tacitus*.

In his Speeches and Edicts *Tiberius* has more the Air of a Philosopher than a Legislator; he reasons not only too often, but too minutely and exactly for an Emperor: He

[t] Ann. I. 71.

moralizes

moralizes and diſtinguiſhes more like a Pedant than a Prince : In any Hiſtory I have caſually perus'd, I never read ſo much ſpeculative Wiſdom, abſtracted and refined Reaſoning in the Speeches of Kings as in thoſe of our Author. Their Actions and Laws generally ſpeak for them. If a Prince according to *Tacitus* or *Tiberius*, (to whom *Tacitus* is the Prompter) ſhould not upon trifling Commotions leave his Capitol, when a Life and Motion is derived to the Whole; neither ſhould he, I think, deſcend as it were from his Throne, and upon every trivial Occaſion deſcant, and moralize, and diſtinguiſh, and inſtruct like a Pedagogue. *Majus aliquod & excelſius a Principe poſtulatur.* Royalty appears greateſt in Acting great Things: In enacting, not prating of, wholeſome Laws and wiſe Regulations : In commanding rather than informing his Subject, and by his Example rather than his Tongue reforming the Manners of a Nation.

Again *Claudius*, as well as *Tiberius*, *populi Licentiam ſeveris Edictis increpuit.* This laſt Word, which occurs ſo often I cannot think very Imperial, or becoming Majeſty. Edicts and Laws, upon whatever provoking Circumſtances fram'd and promulg'd, ſhould ſeem to

convey no Paſſion; but be ſuppos'd the Product of deliberate Reaſon and juſt Policy.

Moſt of *Tacitus*'s Actors in the Provinces, whether introduced as Enemies or Allies to the *Roman* State, as *Tacfarinas*, *Mithridates*, *Gotarzes*, *Zorcines* King of the *Soracians*; *Izates* Leader of the *Adiabenians*, the *Clitæ* Boors of *Cilicia* with their Leader *Throſobor*, the *Ligians*, *Hermundurians*, and *Jazigians*, are very deſpicable, and had probably never made ſo conſiderable a Figure, had not our Annaliſt wanted Materials. Many of them are meer Highlanders or *Mountain-Rats* as the *Mogul* calls an ill Inmate [u] he has got. Several of the People and Nations mentioned are very much unknown and ſcarce heard of before in Hiſtory; or where they have been mention'd, 'twas for their Inſignificancy: As the *Hypæpeni* remind us of the

——— *Parvis habitabat Hypæpis*

of *Ovid*. *Tacitus* ſeems ſenſible of the Meanneſs and Inconſiderableneſs of many of them, and ſo endeavours to raiſe their Credit, and magnify the Importance of his own Relations,

[u] Seva-Gi. See *Fryar*'s *Travels*, p. 171.

by

by telling us what we ſhould not poſſibly have otherwiſe ever known: *Muſulanorum—valida ea Gens. Cinthios haud ſpernendum Nomen*, &c [x].

All the foreign War in the *Eaſt*, which takes up ſo conſiderable a Part of his Annals, and is related with ſo much Particularity and Pomp as if the Fate of the World had been depending upon it: — the mighty Name of *Corbulo*: — the mighty *Parthian* Empire, the Glory of the *Arſacidæ*, is all falſe Glitter: Nothing is done beſeeming the mighty Names of the General and of the Empire: You have ſcarce a Battle fought, or Enterprize undertaken worthy the Recording or Peruſing. You have little elſe but Tumults. Advances, Retreats, Kings recall'd, Kings baniſhed, Kings ſlain, and all in ſuch Confuſion and Hurry, that I believe few Readers peruſe this Part of his Works with any Manner of Satisfaction or Pleaſure. Beſides you have ſuch artificial and infamous Characters on both Sides, ſuch inſignificant Motives of Action, ſuch ſelfiſh Ends, ſuch low ambitious Views, as leave you unconcern'd in the Diſpute and quite indifferent who is the Victor, and who the Vanquiſh'd.

[x] Ann. 3. 38, &c.

The

The Fame of his moſt renowned Generals is often built on falſe Glory, artful Meaſures, and treacherous Views.

In the Campaigns which he gives us the Hiſtory of, we have ſeveral little Circumſtances related (as *Corbulo*'s ſending a Convoy or Guard to the *Hycanian* Ambaſſador,) almoſt too trifling for a *Gazette*.

The ſame Littleneſs appears in the domeſtick Occurrences he recounts; many of which are below the Dignity, and unworthy the Notice of any Author, who profeſſes to write for the Inſtruction of the preſent and future Ages.

What does it concern Poſterity, when ſuch a Veſtal Virgin died: When ſuch a Pretor was knock'd on the Head by a Boor: — When and where *Poppæa* was brought to Bed: — or, When ſuch a Tribune ſtabb'd his Whore?

The Ceremonies obſerv'd in laying the Foundations of the Temple burnt down in the Skirmiſh between the Party of *Vitellius* and the Followers of *Sabinas*, Brother to *Veſpaſian*, are not the proper Subject of Hiſtory. Such formal Affairs at full Length, as Coronations, funeral Proceſſions (in which our Author is happy enough, having no doubt ſeen Royal Obſequies and the Forms of a Court) and Dedications

dications of Temples, would make a more proper Appearance in the Work of an Antiquarian.

Nor does this Obſervation affect the Credit of the ſacred Hiſtory, which was not intended as a Work of Genius compiled by the Rules of human Art. The Dedication of the Temple by *Solomon* was like the Beginning of a new Æra in the *Jewiſh* State, and had a cloſe Connection with their future Fortunes. The God of Heaven was the God of it; and to Him, as their Reſident, were all their Prayers in different Fortunes to be directed. To Him were they to appeal by Oath in their Complaints againſt each other, as the Vindicator of Innocence and the Avenger of Falſehood and Wrong. The Temple was properly and truly their Pledge of Empire; and a juſt Regard to its Service, and the God of it, was the Charter by which they held their Liberty and Happineſs: —— was to them in the Room of civil Virtues and military Proweſs: —— made them happy at Home and victorious Abroad. The Dedication (and *Solomon*'s Prayer upon the Occaſion) was performed with the Dignity and Authority of a Legiſlator promulging the Laws of his new State: And the Prayer in particular

is

is filled with juſter Notions of Providence, as the Source of National Happineſs and Calamity, than are to be found in all the Writings of *Greece* and *Rome*.

To return to our Author. I cannot think it of Moment to Poſterity to know the Crimes of *one* Senator. What Hiſtory would be ſufficient to comprehend the Crimes of Particulars, unconnected with the Buſineſs of the State? Nor is it of more Importance to tell us that *one Man* was ſuſpected of bribing for the Conſulſhip, where 'tis notorious all were corrupt.

His beſt Characters make but a ſorry Figure, as well as his worſt, When I ſee thoſe great Men (as our Author would repreſent them) ſo tamely ſubmitting to the Tyrant's Orders, I have leſs Pity for their Fate, which they almoſt ſeem to have deſerved by their waiting for it. Blood ſo profuſely, ſo wantonly ſhed by a Wretch ſo infamous as *Nero*, gives us the loweſt and meaneſt Opinion of the *Roman* Courage at this Period of their Hiſtory. 'Tis ſomething remarkable in our Author's Actors, that, as upon other Occaſions they reflect like Sages, but act like Fools and Knaves, ſo here they talk big, but behave meanly; they ſhew their

their Indignation, Contempt and Scorn of the Tyrant, yet all ſubmit to his ſanguinary Orders; and not a *Roman* Soul appears, that dares handle a Sword, but to his own Deſtruction.

CHAP.

CHAP. IV.

IT may perhaps be ſaid, that the Meanneſs of the Subject, was the Occaſion of the Meanneſs in the Writer; and that Droſs in any Hands could never be transformed to Gold.

The Defence is in ſome Part true; and *Tacitus*'s own Apology in ſome Meaſure juſt [y]. But ſtill it muſt be aſſerted, that there are Writers of almoſt or altogether as bad Times as thoſe our Author has made the Subject of his Annals, who have more Dignity, tho' leſs Wit, and better anſwer the Character of Hiſtorians, tho' without half his Sagacity and Wiſdom.

And there is beſides one Quality in *Tacitus*, for which no ſufficient Apology has been, or can be made; and which renders him perhaps the moſt diſagreeable Writer that a Reader of any Humanity can peruſe. 'Tis that perpetual Malignity and Ill-nature which diſpoſes him upon all Occaſions to cenſure, blacken and de-

[y] *Pleraque eorum quæ retuli, quæque referam, parvâ forſitan & levia memoratu videri non neſcius ſum: ſed Nemo Annales noſtros cum Scriptura eorum contenderit, qui veteres Populi Romani res compoſuere.* Ann. 4. 32. 33.

fame,

fame, and to give the worſt Meaning to Actions capable of a kinder Interpretation and a more candid Senſe.

The very Vices of *Vitellius*, we are told, were eſteemed Virtues; but Virtues themſelves with *Tacitus* are Vices. Few Men's Actions, Words, nay Looks or Thoughts are free from his Cenſures and Suſpicions; and with Eagerneſs he relates bold and infamous Scandals, even where he affects not to believe them. His beſt Characters have their Faults to diſcredit all their Virtues; and his worſt have their Virtues to diſplay other Men's Crimes. His diſtinguiſhed Generals are but poorly deſcribed and with a Kind of malevolent ſparing Applauſe; as ſpeaking of *Germanicus*, he ſays, *Juveni civile Ingenium, mira Comitas.* Is this anſwerable to the Dignity of the high-born Prince, and the renowned General? If *Tacitus* allows a Man ſome Virtue upon Occaſion, he will take Care to daſh it with ſome greater Vice; and the weak or the wicked Part is generally an Over-ballance in every Character he meddles with. If one Man's Character is approved, it is commonly at the Expence and the Contraſt of anothers. If one Virtue is allowed a Man, it is frequently with

with the Loſs of all beſide; or grant a Man's Life ſpotleſs, his Will appears againſt him to blacken him when dead. Suppoſe a Man eloquent.—He wants Morals; or the Infirmities of Age muſt be alledged to traduce his manly Fame; or the Reputation of his Eloquence when living, muſt be deſtroyed by the little Regard paid to his Writings when he is gone [z]. The greateſt Wonder in *Tacitus* is one good Character ſet off by its native Colours, without invidious Compariſon or odious Contraſt. He allows little Merit any where, except when it is to blacken a Greater. It may be frequently obſerved of our Author, that upon a dubious Point or Character, if he gives ſomething to Praiſe and Candour on one Side, you will find the Wit and Malice more keen and poignant on the other. He will ſometimes ſet out with an Air of Moderation and Charity, but it is only to give a freer Courſe, and to gain more Credit to the bold Scandals that are to follow. Upon theſe Occaſions he ſeems to be acting in his true and natural Character; for he is no where more eloquent and witty than when he blackens: Viper-like, moſt lively when he darts his Venom.

[z] Ann. 4. 52. 61, &c.

If

If he allows a Thing to be well done, the Right of doing it is diſputed; or ſuppoſe the Right, it might have been done better or ſooner; there is ſome Failure in the Execution, or the Conſequence is bad, or the Motive wrong. Such is the Fruitfulneſs of our Author's Invention, that he can find Reaſons to defend the worſt Meaſures, or Arguments, to diſcredit the beſt: — To abate the Infamy of the Vanquiſhed, in order to diminiſh the Glory of the Conquerors: — To leſſen the Guilt of the greateſt Criminals, in order to aggravate the Cruelty of their Puniſhment.

Tacitus is ſo extraordinary a Genius, that there is not a Meaſure taken, or an Argument uſed, which he cannot readily find Wit or Malice; and if not Reaſon, yet the Semblance of Reaſon to oppoſe to: And indeed there are few Actions of the moſt upright Men, which will ſtand the Teſt, if Wit and Malice are the Judges. Theſe together are the moſt dangerous Enemies to common Honeſty, and do moſt immerciful Execution. The Wit to an inadvertent Reader or Hearer recommends the Malice, conceals and makes it palatable, like Poiſon conveyed in a pleaſant Vehicle.

It will, no Doubt, be said, in Defence of *Tacitus*, that upon Occasion he defends the Innocent from unjust Aspersions, as he does *Tiberius* in the Affair of *Drusus*'s Death; and gives Warning to his Readers not to believe Reports and Rumours often falsely grounded, and raised from the Odium that commonly persecutes Princes and their Ministers.

Allow our Author this Truth; and a great Part of his Writings must be condemned, as made up of Falsehood. Men's Opinions, Reflections, Tears, ill-grounded Suspicions, malevolent Conjectures, and slanderous Reports, making a very large Share of his Works. Nay, Lampoons from unknown Hands, and Reports of Family Differences, are thought worthy remembring and recording by our *Roman* Annalist; and the Suspicions and Credulity of a Mob admitted in a Charge against their Governours.——What Pity is it, that a Writer, who knew so well what was good, should act no better!

It is said of *Cato*, that in his Chronicles or historical Memoirs of the *Roman* Wars, he did not mention any Commanders, but without any Names at all gave the naked Event of Things.

Things [a]. But our Author ſeems to regard Perſons more than Things; it is not ſo much what is done, as the Manner of doing it; nor the Manner ſo much as the bad Manner of doing it, that engages his Pen. He acts more the Part of a Satyriſt than an Hiſtorian; of an Accuſer than a Judge; ever awake and intent to find Fault, with ſpecious Arguments and Objections ready at Hand againſt every Meaſure or Character that preſents itſelf. When he goes on from Character to Character, ſtill ſuſpecting, and ſtill blackening, I think, of the *Benjamite*, who attended his diſtreſs'd Monarch, and as he proceeded ſtill went on Curſing.

It would be almoſt endleſs, as it is needleſs, to quote all that might be produced to make good this Charge againſt *Tacitus:* Let a few Inſtances ſuffice.

Auguſtus's Conduct, in confining the Empire, it is ſuppoſed, might proceed from Fear or Envy. His adopting *Tiberius* might not be owing to any Regard he had for the Commonwealth; but that diſcovering his Arrogance and Cruelty, he might ſeek Glory to himſelf by a Compariſon with ſo infamous a Succeſſor [b]. *Suetonius*

[a] *Nepot. Vit. Caton.* [b] Ann. I. 10, 11.

mentions ſuch a Report, but is candid and careful in refuting it[c]. And both theſe Inſinuations are proved falſe and ſcandalous by *Strada*[d] in his Proluſions, to which I refer the Reader.

Some Apology is indeed offered by *Tacitus* for *Auguſtus*'s Conduct, but 'tis followed with all the Malice and Rancour imaginable; and his very domeſtick Affairs are ranſacked, to expoſe him the more[e].

The Death of the two Brothers *L.* and *C. Cæſar*, are obliquely charged upon *Livia*; tho' *Suetonius*, *Velleius* and *Florus* give not, I think, the leaſt Inſinuation of this Kind.

In a very nice and critical Affair, all Men, ſays the Annaliſt, blamed *Germanicus*. *Tacitus* offers not the leaſt Defence for his diſtreſſed and upright General; but inflames by his Wit, if he did not raiſe, the Objections againſt him[f].

As *Antonia*, the Mother of *Germanicus*, is not mentioned as attending her Son's Funeral, he takes this Silence of the Hiſtorians and Journaliſts for a poſitive Proof that ſhe did not attend; and tho' he allows that ſhe might be prevented by Sickneſs, or her Soul vanquiſhed

[c] *Sueton. Tiber.* 21. [d] L. 1. Proluſ. 2. Hiſtor.
[e] Ann. 1. 10, 11. [f] *Ibid.* 1. 40.

with

with Sorrow might not be able to bear the Repreſentation of ſuch a mighty Calamity: Yet he chuſes rather to believe, that ſhe was forced by *Tiberius* and *Livia*, who, affecting equal Affliction with her, would have it ſeem, that, by the Example of the Mother, the Grandmother too and Uncle were detained [g].

There ſeems to be a Prejudice in *Tacitus* againſt almoſt every Thing that *Tiberius* does or ſays. The moſt laudable Actions of this Prince are diminiſhed or explained away: His moſt candid Expreſſions perverted: His ſmalleſt Crimes aggravated; and even indifferent Things done by him, are interpreted in the worſt Senſe they can poſſibly bear; but the greateſt Crimes which he puniſhes are ſoftened, and the Odium thrown upon the Judge, not the Offender.

His continuing for a long Time the ſame Governours in the Provinces, is inſinuated to proceed from a Principle of Envy; *ne plures fruerentur* [h]: Tho' this Meaſure is perhaps as much to be applauded as any that this politic Prince ever purſued. *Strada*, and the Commentators upon *Tacitus*, have ſhewn this Con-

[g] Ann. 3. 3. [h] *Ibid.* 2. 80.

duct of *Tiberius* to be both wiſe and merciful; but our Author chuſes rather to aſſign any Reaſon for it, than ſuch a one as would do Honour to the Prince.

In the firſt Annal, among other Reflections upon *Auguſtus*, one is, for his having aſſumed divine Honours: *Nihil Deorum Honoribus relictum cum ſe templis & effigie Numinum coli vellet* [i]. But when *Tiberius* refuſes a Temple and Adoration, tho' no Prince could ſpeak with more Greatneſs of Mind, Juſtice and good Senſe than he does upon this Occaſion, yet an invidious Turn is given to this commendable Action: "And by many it was aſcribed, ſays "our Annaliſt, to a conſcious Diffidence; "by others, to a Degeneracy of Spirit." The Reaſons aſſign'd why it muſt be this Degeneracy of Spirit, any one, who knows *Tacitus*'s Manner, may ſwear to be his own. *Optimos quippe mortalium altiſſima capere: Sic Herculem & Liberum apud Græcos: Quirinum apud nos Deûm numero additos. Melius Auguſtum qui ſperaverit — contemptu famæ contemni virtutes* [k]. The Affectation of Antiquity and the Wit plainly father themſelves.

[i] Ann. c. 10. [k] *Ibid.* 4. 40. *Tibe-*

Tiberius's Silence upon Occasion, and which he intends as popular, is ascribed to his Pride. The Impunity of *Rubrius Fabatus*, a State-Criminal, is supposed owing to the Emperor's Forgetfulness rather than his Clemency [l].

Yet at other Times we are told of his long-lived Hatred, particularly to *Serenus*; which, I think, did not deserve to be mentioned; for *Tiberius* shews himself kind, or at least far less cruel than he might have been, had he been disposed to Vengeance [m].

The Cause of *Cocceius Nerva*'s Death, assign'd by those, who knew his Thoughts was, according to our Author, his Fear and Indignation from a View of the publick Miseries; whence, without Doubt, considering *Nerva*'s Character, new Odium must be derived upon the Tyrant [n].

The Annalist frequently pretends to know the Heart of *Tiberius*, and produces his Thoughts to set aside the natural and obvious Meaning of his Words. If he allows him one Virtue, it is at the Expence of all beside; and even this Virtue must be discredited by his

[l] Ann. 6. 13, 14. [m] *Ibid.* 4. 29, 30.
[n] *Ibid.* 6. 26.

practiſing it ſo rarely, or in a Manner not popular.

When he paid a hundred thouſand great Seſterces, to make good the Damages done by Fire. " His Bounty, ſays our Author, was " the more grateful to the People, as he was " ever ſparing in private Buildings: In Truth, " his public Works never exceeded two [o]."

Hiphilin ſeems to do much more Juſtice to this Prince's Munificence. " He repaired, " ſays he, all the ancient Edifices that were " fallen to Ruins (for he built nothing new but " the Auguſtal) and yet gave himſelf none of " the Honour; but ſet the Names of their " firſt Founders upon them. Though he was " very ſparing in what related to private Ex- " pences, he employed a great deal of Mo- " ney for the Benefit of the Publick; for he " not only made a World of Repairs, but he " was likewiſe very liberal, as well towards " Communities, as particular Perſons [p]."

Aquila's Adultery had not perhaps been mentioned, but to ſhew the Prince's obſtinate Cruelty in her Sentence, *viz.* Baniſhment: Shocking Cruelty, venial Crime!

[o] Ann. 6. 45. [p] *Hiph. Manning*'s Tranſlat. Vol. I. p. 214.

The

The Story of the Adultereſs *Julia* is told in ſuch a Manner, as to raiſe our Pity for her Misfortune rather than our Abhorrence of her Guilt. The Odium of her Crime is to be forgot, and buried in the preſumed Cruelty of the injured Huſband [q]. "From the ſame Root, "adds the Annaliſt, was derived his Cruelty "to *Sempronius Gracchus*, who had debauch-"ed her, and inflamed her Averſion to her "Huſband." *Vell: Paterculus*, makes *Tiberius* merciful upon this Occaſion: *Appius Claudius & Sempronius Gracchus, — quaſi cujuſlibet Uxore violata pœnas pependere; cum Cæſaris filiam & Neronis violaſſent Conjugem* [r].

Yet the Conſtancy of *Sempronius* in dying muſt be applauded, in order, no Doubt, to aggravate the Emperor's Cruelty who commanded his Execution.

Tiberius's Cruelty might indeed have been cenſured upon this Occaſion by our Author, who ſcruples not to condemn *Auguſtus* for much leſs Severity on a ſimilar Account. *Silanus* had been guilty of Adultery with his Grand-daughter; for which he is only forbid the Emperor's Preſence, and excluded his Friendſhip, but now returns in Safety to *Rome*.

[q] Ann. 1. 53.

[r] *Paterc.* L. 2. c. 100.

Upon

Upon this Occasion our Politician remarks, that *Augustus* to a Fault common between Men and Women gave the Name of Religion violated and Treason; and herein (in the Punishment I suppose) departed from the Clemency of the ancient *Romans*, and violated his own Laws[f]. I shall not here stay to dispute the Truth of this Remark, or to compare the Punishment of Adultery as inflicted by the ancient Laws, and by *Augustus*; but would only have the Reader observe, what a softening Term he gives to this Crime. *Culpam inter viros ac faminas vulgatam.* Were we disposed to insinuate in Imitation of our Writer, might we not suspect that he was playing the Sycophant, and complimenting Court-Villainy?

But to return to *Tiberius* — It was probably to aggravate his Cruelty, that all he is made to charge *Agrippina* with is, *Adrogantiam Oris & contumacem Animum.* A false Plot, one would imagine, might easily have been forged, and Witnesses suborn'd. This Conduct of *Tiberius* seems not at all agreeable to the deep Policy every where ascribed to him, nor indeed to the Policy of any Tyrant; which common-

[f] Ann. 3. 24.

ly

ly pretends falſe Plots, or Conſpiracies, to juſtify ſanguinary Executions. *Agrippina*, it ſeems, was a Favourite of the People. *Germanicus* had been a Favourite: Why then this unneceſſary Provocation?

Suetonius writes what looks likeſt Truth, that the Emperor charged her with intending at one Time to take Sanctuary at *Auguſtus*'s Statue; at another to fly to the Army.

The Inſinuation of *Agrippina*'s Death, ſeems equally falſe. "Feeling no Relaxation "of *Tiberius*'s Cruelty, Death grew her Choice, "unleſs, adds the Annaliſt, *ſhe was bereaved* "*of Nouriſhment, and her Diſeaſe feigned to* "*be of her own Seeking* [t]."

If this Inſinuation is true, the Cauſe of feigning her Death voluntary muſt be to avoid popular Odium; and the ſame Motive, one may reaſonably ſuppoſe, ſhould have induced *Tiberius*, not to have perſecuted her without Cauſe, real or pretended.

But the Inſinuation ſeems falſe. *Suetonius* aſſerts, "That when ſhe reſolved to ſtarve her-"ſelf to Death, he ordered her Mouth to be "wreſted open, and Food to be cramm'd

[t] Ann. 6. 25.

"down

" down her Throat by Force; but ſhe per-
" ſiſting in her Reſolution —— pined away [u]."

Tiberius, it muſt be own'd, was bad enough: Yet to do him Juſtice, it muſt be acknowledg'd, that upon moſt Occaſions in the Beginning of his Reign, notwithſtanding the Author's and the Peoples general Reflections upon him, he ſhews himſelf a Prince of conſummate Wiſdom and Prudence, a Judge of Morals and common Equity, a Deſpiſer of Glory, and a Patron of Right; and upon Occaſions, merciful, and liberal with Diſcretion, and without Oſtentation or Vanity [w].

Tacitus indeed ſeems not conſiſtent with himſelf, while he would aggravate the Odium againſt *Tiberius*. " The Reflections of moſt
" People upon him, he ſays, were, that du-
" ring the ſeveral Years of his Abode at *Rhodes*,
" he exercis'd no other Occupation than that
" of *Meditating* future Vengence, ſtudying
" the Arts of Treachery, and practiſing ſecret
" and abominable Senſualities [x]." If this is falſe, and *Tacitus* knew it to be ſuch; or, at leaſt, if he did not know *Tiberius*'s Thoughts

[u] *Sueton. Tibor.* 55. [w] He exerted the princely Power by Degrees; and tho' it was with great Variety, yet it was generally for the publick Good. *Sueton. Tiber.* 33. [x] Ann. 1. 4.

to

to be thus employed, why is this Scandal admitted? If he gives it for true, I aſk, how is it conſiſtent with the Character he gives of this Prince in the Concluſion of the Sixth Annal? *Egregium fama vitaque quoad privatus, vel in Imperiis ſub Auguſto.* Yet the Reflections of the People which we here cenſure, are ſuppos'd made before an Experience had of *Tiberius*'s Capacity or Qulifications, and while *Auguſtus* was in Being. Nay, *Tiberius*, when Emperor, is repreſented crafty in feigning Virtues while *Germanicus* and *Druſus* ſurvived; and ſecret in his Luſts, while he lov'd or fear'd *Sejanus*; nay, if we may believe *Tacitus*, *Tiberius* was an excellent Prince till the Death of *Druſus* [y]: And *Sejanus* it ſeems, while he was laying the Foundations of his Power, was obliged to recommend himſelf by good Counſels; which, we may therefore imagine, were the only, or the beſt Way he had to inſinuate himſelf into the Emperor's Favour.

There was however Room for Slander where *Tiberius* was the Subject; — but have better Men, any better Uſage from this Writer's Pen?

The publick Speeches of *Nero*, in which he made ſo many Profeſſions of Clemency, are

[y] Ann. 4. 6.

aſcribed

aſcribed to the Compoſer *Seneca:* Either to ſhew what worthy Counſels he gave, *or in Oſtenſtation of his Wit* [z].

Now would not a candid Writer, and one acquainted with the great Abilities of *Seneca*, have hoped the beſt, and been content with ſuppoſing, that the Tutor, ſeeing the bloody Diſpoſition of his Pupil, took this Method to imbue his Heart with tender Impreſſions, and to make him ambitious of the Praiſe due to a merciful Prince?

Such ſeemed to have been the Sentiments of the Senate of *Rome* upon Occaſion of one of the Speeches, I ſuppoſe, here alluded to; "which made, ſaith *Xiphilin*, ſo ſtrong an "Impreſſion upon their Minds, that it was "ordered to be engraved upon a Pillar of Sil-"ver, and read every Year upon the Day "when the Conſuls enter upon their Office: "'Twas the Model of a wiſe and juſt Ad-"miniſtration, which they had a Mind ſhould "be held continually before the Eyes of the "Prince [a]."

After *Nero* had procured his Mother's Aſſaſſination, he acquaints the Senate with it, and at the ſame Time gives in a Catalogue of her

[z] Ann. 13. c. 11. [a] *Xiphil.* by *Manning*, Vol. I. p 331.

Crimes,

Crimes, in order to excuſe the Parricide. " On " this Occaſion, ſays the Annaliſt, it was not " upon *Nero* that the popular Cenſure fell " (for *Nero*'s brutal Barbarity ſurpaſſed all " Cenſure or Complaint) but *Seneca adverſo* " *rumore erat* for confeſſing the Deed [b]." Whereas, had the Fact been denied or diſſembled, I dare ſay our Author would have ſet all *Rome* a laughing at the Impudence of thoſe who could deny ſo notorious a Fact, and which was known to all the World. It was, no Doubt, the Notoriety of the Parricide that occaſioned the Charge of the Plot brought againſt *Agrippina*; the Reality of which 'tis likely would ſooner be believed, than that ſhe was ſlain, the Emperor's Mother, without his Orders, and yet with Impunity to her Murderers.

Fabius Ruſticus is quoted by *Tacitus*, as ſpeaking in Praiſe of *Seneca*; but the Annaliſt would willingly detract from the Authority and Credit of this Writer, as being one who manifeſts a conſtant Zeal to extoll *Seneca*, by whoſe Friendſhip his own Fortune flouriſhed [b].

A Friend, it ſeems, is not to be believed, when ſpeaking in Vindication or Praiſe of his Friend; but Scandal through any Channel is

[b] Ann. 14. 11. [c] *Ibid.* 13. 20.

admitted

admitted without Contradiction; and *Piſo*'s Friends averring "their having ſeen him with "a Bundle of Letters of *Tiberius* and his "cruel Orders towards *Germanicus*; —— and "that neither did *Piſo* die by his own Hands, "but by thoſe of an expreſs and private Exe-"cutioner[c]; —— is left to be ſwallowed by the Reader at Diſcretion.

The infamous Slanders thrown upon *Seneca* by the infamous *Suilius*, are at large diſplayed, as if with Deſign to blaſt the Fame of this great Philoſopher and upright Miniſter; and I think any one acquainted with *Tacitus*'s Manner may eaſily perceive his own witty Malice in the Invective here aſcribed to *Suilius*. Nay, *Tacitus* ſeems to plead the Cauſe of this Wretch, notwithſtanding his confeſſed Infamy, and ſays, "he was not yet ſo low as his Ene-"mies wiſhed him[d]."

The Objections againſt *Seneca* upon other Occaſions, are ſcurrilous and malicious; not manly, rational, or matter of Fact; as perhaps no rational Objections could be raiſed againſt him. Yet as if all this was not enough, we have *Seneca* brought in after all as perſonating

[c] Ann. 3. 16. [d] *Ibid* 13. 42.

his

his Enemies, and turning Satyrist against himself [e].

I have added at the Bottom of the Page the honest Remark of *Lipsius* [f] upon Occasion of the Calumnies rais'd against *Seneca*; and leave it to the Reader to judge, whether his Charge against *Dio*, be not in part justly due to our Annalist, whom the Commentator would persuade us was a Friend to *Seneca*; but *Lipsius*, notwithstanding his great Learning, and particular Labours upon this Writer, was much a Stranger to his true Character.

Seneca's Misfortune was, that he was a Minister of State; and therefore Knave by Profession; and *Tacitus* with the rest of the World is

[e] Ann. 14. 52, 3.

[f] — *Omnes res relictas habet* [*Dio*] *præut culpet virum inculpatum. Ita Adulterium illi objicit cum Agrippinâ: Pullarium eum fuisse ait, idemque vitium ab illo insitum Neroni: caussam auctoremque interfectæ Matris; aliaque quæ homo vanus, præter fidem præterque omnium Mentem, conviciatur velute plaustro. Quibus odij Caussis? Aut quo mendacij pretio? Nam Seneca tanto anterior non injuriâ, non beneficio cognitus illi. Sed credo judicij quædam merumque perversitas fuit, quæ eundem illum in Ciceronem exacuit, quæ in Cassium, Brutum, omnesque bonos. Caveat ab his, moneo, juventus: & e campis illis ita antiquitatum & historiæ flores legat, ut non colligat Venena.* Lipsi. ad Lib. 13. Ann. Comment.

ſure to make the laſt, the worſt; ſo *Macro* muſt be worſe than *Sejanus* [g].

But let us conſider our Author's Treatment of other illuſtrious Perſonages in the Courſe of his Hiſtory.

Piſo, we are told, was of great Fame among the People for his Virtue; *or*, adds our Annaliſt, *for the Semblance of Virtues* [h].

Mentioning *Fenius Rufus*, he aſcribes to him *ſegnis Innocentiâ*: i. e. He was a heavy, harmleſs Creature. Surely he might have deſerved ſome kinder Uſage from what the Annaliſt is obliged to ſay of him in this very Chapter, *viz.* "That the Emperor made "him Captain of the Guards in Compliment "to the People, who loved him for his diſ- "intereſted Adminiſtration in the Superinten- "dancy of the publick Stores; an Office from "which he had drawn no Gain or Advan- "tage [i]: — And elſewhere he is deſcribed by "our Author as of a Life and Reputation in "general Eſteem [k]."

Thus *Sylla*'s Innocence is aſcribed to his deſpicable Puſillanimity and Cowardice.[l]

Thus again *Herdeonius Flaccus* is repre-

[g] Ann. 6. 48. [h] *Ibid.* 15. 48. [i] *Ibid.* 14. 51. [k] *Ibid.* 15. 50. [l] *Ibid.* 13. 47.

ſented

ſented ſpiritleſs, terrified, and only through Stupidity innocent [m].

Again, how ſlanderous and wickedly inſinuating is the Reflection upon *Otho*'s relinquiſhing his Pleaſures *beyond the Hopes of all: Eo plus formidinis*, ſays the Annaliſt, *afferebant falſæ Vitutes & Vitia reditura. Otho* was reform'd at laſt beyond the Expectation of all Men: Hence no Joy for his appearing Virtues, but more Dread from his returning Vices.

Galba's Character is drawn as ill naturedly and invidiouſly as there was Room for it. His old Age is made the Subject of Scorn and Contempt; which might as eaſily have procured him Reverence, at leaſt Pity for the Infirmities to which Mortality is ſubject [n]. "That "'tis ſaid, was called real Wiſdom, which in "him was real Heavineſs: He was rather free "from Vices, than endow'd with Virtues." Mr. *Gordon* ſays *many Virtues*; which is not in the Original. The Tranſlator probably ſaw, that the Author contradicted himſelf, having allowed in this very Chapter; "that he had "commanded in the *German* Wars with "ſignal Renown — that as Proconſul in *Afric*,

[m] Hiſt. 1. 56. [n] *Ibid.* 1. 7.

" and afterwards in *Spain*, he had behaved " with Moderation, Gentleneſs and Juſtice [o]: " and that in the Opinion of all Men *he had* " *been capable of Empire had he never been* " *Emperor.*" Where the Author's own Wit is plainly obſervable.

When *Pætus* had made *Corbulo* acquainted with his own diſtreſs'd Condition from the Approach of *Vologeſes* and the *Parthian* Army: " *Corbulo*, ſays the Annaliſt, made no great " Haſte; that the more the Danger encreas'd, " the greater Praiſe he might reap from bring- " ing Relief [p]." Yet this ſame *Corbulo* preſently after begins the ſhorteſt Rout, carries with him large Quantities of Proviſions, that he might be able to relieve the diſtreſs'd Camp effectually, and repel Famine as well as the Foe. —He addreſſes himſelf to the Legions from Rank to Rank; perſuading, exhorting, and admoniſhing: — And the Legions, in Conſequence of theſe Admonitions and Perſuaſions of their General, are fired with Alacrity for the common Cauſe, -- and ſped their March Day and Night without Intermiſſion [q].

Mucianus is made to ſupport the Civil War (the Event of which at this Time muſt be

[o] Hiſt. 1. 49. [p] Ann. 15. 10. [q] *Ibid.* 15. 12.

very

very dubious) "that he might the more greedi-
"ly ſqueeze the Publick [r]." Now, I preſume, it was *Mucianus*'s After-Conduct, at this Time not foreſeen, which gave Riſe to this Reflection; and even that Conduct was capable of a kinder Interpretation than the Hiſtorian here gives it. "'Tis not to be expreſs'd,
"ſaith *Xiphilin*, how much Money *Mucian*
"amaſs'd from all Parts, with which he fill'd
"the Royal Treaſury; charging himſelf with
"the Hatred of theſe Exactions to ſpare *Veſpa-*
"*ſian* [t]."

This ſame *Mucianus* preſſes *Antonius* by Letters to wait his coming, and herein but urges the Counſel and Orders of *Vaſpaſian*, contending for a Victory void of Slaughter, and exempt from Tears and Sorrow.

Tho' the Reaſoning was juſt, and the Policy wiſe and merciful, yet all this with *Tacitus* is but mere Pretence. "In Reality, ſays he, *Mu-*
"*cianus* gave this Advice from a Paſſion for
"gaining all the Glory, and ſtudying to re-
"ſerve to himſelf the intire Honour of the
"War." Now ſhould it not be remembered, that the Advice and Orders were from *Veſpaſian*, and that the General was but purſuing his

[r] Hiſt. 2. 84. [t] *Xiph.* by *Manning*, Vol. II. p. 41.

Maſter's Plan? And can it be imagin'd, that *Veſpaſian* did this with no other Deſign, but that all the Glory of the War might devolve upon *Mucianus?*

The Writers neareſt thoſe Times ſay, that *L. Beſſus* and *Antonius* deſerted *Vitellius*, and came over to *Veſpaſian* "from a Regard to "Peace, and a Love of the Publick;" which was not improbable, conſidering the Experience they had of *Vitellius:* But *Tacitus* inclines to believe, that it was from Emulation and Envy, that they overturn'd their former Maſter, for fear others might have more of his Favour [t].

Upon two Seditions happening in the Army, we are told, that there were not wanting thoſe who believed both theſe Seditions to have been raiſed by the Intrigues and Contrivance of *Antony*, that upon himſelf alone might devolve the Glory and Emoluments of the War [u].

This I think a ſcandalous Inſinuation, and not fit to have been mentioned by the ſame Writer, who had juſt before related the particular Pains taken by *Antony* to quell both Seditions, and to protect thoſe whom they chiefly threatened.

[t] Hiſt. L. 2. 100. [u] *Ibid.* 3. 11.

In

In the ſame Manner he tells us, that *Herdeonius Flaccus*, by a Courſe of Diſſimulation, fomented the firſt Efforts of *Civilis*[w]. And upon *Herdeonius* not purſuing the Plan which *Tacitus* thinks propereſt, (for be it noted that our Author is both wiſer and honeſter than any General or Stateſman he introduces,) a Suſpicion is raiſed, and confidently maintain'd; "that "by the Co-operation of the chief Comman- "ders the War was kindled; and hence all the "many Evils produc'd by it, or apprehended "from it, were conſtrued to ariſe from no want "of Bravery in the Soldiers, from no ſuperior "Power in the Enemy, but purely from "the Guile and Baſeneſs of the Leaders." I deſire the Reader to conſider how conſiſtent this is with the Character and Conduct of *Herdeonius* juſt before applauded, as perſonally adviſing and directing this very *Civilis*, to drive back the Forces ſummoned to ſuccour *Vitellius*, and to with-hold the Legions from removing:— And this Advice *Herdeonius* gave, according to our Author, from a Mind well diſpos'd towards *Veſpaſian*, and in Tenderneſs to the Commonwealth, on which preſent Deſtruction was ſure-

[w] Hiſt. 4. 17, 18.

ly falling were the War renewed — and ſo many thouſand Men poured into *Italy* [x].

Vocula, in a Battle with the *Germans*, gains the Victory; yet muſt be blamed for not purſuing it. Indeed the Generals on both Sides are blamed, as I think few Characters or Meaſures to be found in *Tacitus*, are without Blame or Cenſure. 'Tis very eaſy from the Event, to judge of the Meaſures that might have been neceſſary to prevent bad Conſequences, or improve Advantages. To judge of the Propriety of Meaſures from the Event, is far from judging equally. What might be the wiſeſt Meaſures that can be purſued by Generals, (as poſſibly might be the Caſe of *Vocula* here,) may by a carping, opiniotative, ſedentary Critic be judged from viewing Conſequences (at the Time of Action not to be foreſeen by mere Mortals,) weak, irrational, careleſs, or diſhoneſt. But *Vocula*'s Delay was not attended with the bad Conſequences, which can juſtify the Charge of ill Conduct upon him: He raiſed the Siege of the Camp with freſh Slaughter of the Enemy, and a ſecond Victory. He could have done no more with the utmoſt Expedition. "But "he might have rais'd it ſooner." — Yet for

[x] Hiſt. 4. 12.

any

any Thing our Author knows to the contrary, a forc'd March with harraſs'd Troops might have ruin'd the whole Deſign. Let what our Author ſeems to approve in the Conduct of *Suetonius Paulinus*, who under great Diſadvantages did not inſtantly attack the Troops of *Vitellius* commanded by *Cecina*, be here applied. " It is Time enough to conquer, ſays that wiſe " General, when ſufficient Precaution is ta- " ken that we be not conquered [v]." Where, by the by, the Applauſe is intended to the Wit, as well as to the Conduct of *Paulinus*.

But to do our Author Juſtice, he uſes all Sides and all Characters alike: If *Herdeonius*, and *Vocula*, and *Antony*, are blamed, ſo are *Civilis*, and *Claſſicus*, and *Tutor*, and every Body, noble and ignoble, that comes in his Way.

When *Sabinus* was preſs'd by many principal Citizens, to take Part with his Brother *Veſpaſian*, he received not the Advice heartily and chearfully. " There were ſome, ſays the Hiſto- " rian, who blamed him, as through Envy and " Emulation, retarding his Brother's Fortune."

Surprizing indeed (as well as notoriouſly falſe, as appear'd by the Event,) that a Brother ſhould carry his Envy ſo far, as to obſtruct,

[v] Hiſt. 2. 25.

or

or not promote the Meaſures taken, to place the Empire of *Rome* in a Brother's Family; and conſequently ſhould envy himſelf ſo diſtinguiſh'd a Place of Honour in the World.

The Hiſtorian adds, " that he was believ'd to " have propp'd his Brother's Credit, otherwiſe " ſinking, and, for the Money lent, to have re- " ceived in Pledge his Houſe and Poſſeſſions :" *Unde, quanquam manente in ſpeciem concordia, offenſarum operta metuebantur.* Strange again! If *Veſpaſian* had mortgaged his Eſtate to his Brother *Sabinus*, could any Thing be more wiſh'd for by the Mortgagee, than an Empire to repay him [z]. (*Mucianus* it ſeems, as has been already obſerv'd, lent freely, from a Proſpect of making more free with the publick Teaſure hereafter.) Nor could *Veſpaſian*, one would imagine, be diſpleaſed to find a Brother able and willing to ſupport his ſinking Credit; — a Brother, whoſe cordial Affection ſhould not have been called in Queſtion by the ſame Writer, who has related how he ſacrificed his Life

[z] They had heard it ſaid, that *Edward* the Fourth of *England* recovered the City of *London*, and by that the Kingdom, by the vaſt Debts that he owed there; Men looking upon the helping of him to the Crown, as the helping themſelves to their Money, which was elſe deſparate. Lord *Clarend.* Hiſt. Vol. I. part 2. 800. p. 634.

in

in the Cauſe of his Brother. The Affair of the Mortgage, whence only theſe *Operta offenſarum* could ariſe, was probably nothing more than Hearſay, Report, or Suſpicion; which, when not ſufficiently grounded, ought rather to be confuted, or buried in Silence than blazon'd, by a candid and honeſt Hiſtorian.

Upon *Sabinus*'s being ſlain, we have his Character. "Five and fifty Years he had "bore Arms for the Common-wealth, and "both in Peace and War bore a very ſignal "Reputation; and in the Innocency of his "Life, and the Juſtice of his Actions, was "unſpotted."

Here, it had been well if our Author had ſtopped; but he muſt let us know, "that he "talk'd too much, —— and in the End of his "Life ſome judg'd him cowardly or ſpiritleſs; "while many thought him prudent and mo-"derate, and deſirous to ſpare the Blood of "his Fellow-Citizens [a]."

Now had not this Peccadillo of his being a great Talker, and the Opinion of his Cowardice or Sloth, entertain'd by a few, been as well left out as admitted to ſtain this faultleſs Character? Should an Hiſtorian adopt every

[a] Hiſt. 3. 75.

idle

idle Opinion or ſiniſter Report to an honeſt Man's Diſadvantage? Nothing leſs than a perſonal Knowledge, or Information, founded upon the beſt Authority, ſhould be Warrant for handing down to Poſterity, ſuch Strokes of Calumny and Malice. Yet how often does our Author repeat the Phraſe, *Nec defuere qui ſuſpicionibus arguerent?* — Are the Suſpicions of the worſt of Men, and the bold Scandals of the profeſs'd Enemies to every Virtue, to be allow'd a Place in Hiſtory? Are not the Generality of Mankind ſtill wicked, and more willing to admit Scandal, than vindicate Innocence, from a ſordid and ſelfiſh Principle too commonly obſervable of envying ſuperiour Virtue, and blackening Men better than themſelves?

Tacitus himſelf has a peculiar Talent at Slander. I know few of his Characters of the laudable Side, but where 'tis to blacken another. Thus *Germanicus* is moſt pompouſly extoll'd to blacken *Piſo*; and *Piſo*, as we before obſerv'd, is attempted to be clear'd from *Germanicus*'s Death, in order to load *Tiberius* the more. Thus *Blæſus*'s Innocence is carefully diſplay'd to blacken his Murderer *Vitellius*[b].

[b] Hiſt. 3. 39.

Upon

Upon other Occaſions *Tacitus* is very ſhy of his Encomiums; or, when he would give you a fine Character, it muſt be invidiouſly drawn, and rais'd upon the Ruin of other Men's. It muſt be a Negative Excellence, deſigned more to expoſe the Defects of others than to exhibit the real and poſitive Virtues of the Perſon applauded. He is detracting while he is applauding, and ſnarles even in his Panegyricks. Obſerve the following Inſtance: *Ingenium illuſtre alteribus ſtudiis juvenis admodum dedit.* NON UT PLERIQUE UT NOMINE MAGNIFICO SEGNE OTIUM VELARET[c].

'Tis indeed a fine Character he here gives us of *Helvidius Priſcus:* Wherein he too gives us his own Knowledge of the Stoic Philoſophy; but ſtill he muſt admit a Stroke of Envy to ſoil this lovely Portrait: *Erant quibus appetentior Famæ videretur:* Which ſeems purpoſely admitted to introduce his own Reflection: *Quando etiam ſapientibus Cupido gloriæ noviſſime exuitur. Priſcus*'s Vigour and Firmneſs are alſo call'd in Queſtion; tho' the Hiſtorian could not be ignorant, that both theſe

[c] Hiſt. 4. 5.

Charges,

Charges, his too great Love of Fame, and want of Conſtancy, are directly contrary to the Principles of that Philoſophy, of which he makes *Priſcus* not a nominal, but a real and ſerious Profeſſor.

To give more Inſtances of our Author's Malignity of Temper and Propenſity to Scandal, is as unneceſſary as it is diſagreeable. I will only add, that the Times, bad as they were, which he makes the Subject of his Story, gave not Scope enough for his ſlanderous Diſpoſition. After knowing our Author's Affectation of Antiquity and Taſte for Politicks, it is not at all a Wonder to find the Names of *Marius*, *Scylla*, and *Pompey*, not paſs'd unnoticed: And conſidering his Talent at Slander, it had been ſtill more a Wonder to have found them mentioned without Obloquy. They had, without Doubt, all their Failings, and the two former may be juſtly ſtyled "*the Curſes* of "*their Country*." But obſerve how our Author characterizes them: — *Marius* OF THE LEES OF THE PEOPLE: *Scylla* THE CRUELEST OF THE NOBILITY, over-turn'd the Liberty of *Rome:* AND *Pompey* NO BETTER THAN EITHER[d]. — To ſee the Diſparity between the

[d] Hiſt. 2. 38.

Characters

Characters of *Marius* and *Scylla*, and *Pompey*, I refer the Reader to the *Life of* Cicero, by Dr. *Middleton*; a Writer, who muſt be allowed a competent Judge in this Caſe.

Our Author ſeems indeed to forget himſelf in the preceding Book, where he makes the People to diſtinguiſh as juſtly, and reaſon as regularly, and be as witty, as maliciouſly witty, as *Tacitus* himſelf could have been: — *Manſiſſe C. Julio, manſiſſe Cæſare Auguſto* IMPERIUM, *manſuram fuiſſe ſub Pompeio Brutoque* REMPUBLICAM. *Nunc pro Othone an pro Vitellio in Templa ituros? Utraſque impias Preces, utraque deteſtanda Vota inter duos, quorum Bello ſolum id ſcires, deteriorem fore qui viciſſet* [e].

I cannot help thinking (tho' the Remark properly belongs to another Place) that the Diſtinction and Judgment of the People here, is much too refined at that Time of Day, when little Regard was had to the Publick under any Name or Form of Government: The Senate and People of *Rome* our Author ſoon after calls ANTIQUATED NAMES [f]; and theſe very People are repreſented, "as having neither Sincerity, nor Judgment, but idolizing any

[e] Hiſt. 1. 50. [f] *Ibid.* c. 55.

"Empe-

" Emperor, whoſoever he were, by Applau-
" ſes uſual and extravagant [g]."

I cannot conclude this Chapter without lamenting, that an Hiſtorian of our own Nation, under the Direction of a better Light, and the clearer Authority of a divine Law than our Author enjoy'd, ſhould have indulged ſo greatly this malevolence of Temper.

Dr. *Burnet*, Biſhop of *Saliſbury*, it muſt be own'd, ſays many good Things; and ſpeaks with the Sincerity of one, who believed and acted as he ſpake: At the ſame Time it is evident, that he had ſtrong Paſſions and Prejudices, and too readily gave in to vulgar Reports and ſecret Intelligences that favour'd his own Opinions of Perſons or Things, and flatter'd his own Self-love; which often diſpoſes him to caſt a Shade on the Virtues and Conduct of others. He frequently approves or condemns Meaſures as he likes the Man that propoſes or purſues them, and the Man as he liked his Principles, or ſhared in his Favour or Diſpleaſure. When Malevolence, private Intereſt, Paſſion, and Party-Zeal, direct the Pen of an Hiſtorian, he juſtly forfeits the Eſteem of the cool and the candid. Add to this the Biſhop's intem-

[g] Hiſt. c. 32.

perate

perate Rage againſt Vice, which ſometimes ſeems to be too flaming, and to hurry him out of Temper, Moderation, and Charity. With a Writer of this Turn, unhappy Accidents are improv'd into formal Miſchief: Indiſcretions are branded with the Name of Impiety: Levities are unpardonable; and to be without Vice, is but a Negative Goodneſs, which rather invites his Cenſure than Applauſe. In ſhort, the Biſhop, if we may judge from his Writings, was a Man of good Senſe and real Piety; yet, upon Occaſions, he ſhews all the Indignation of a diſappointed Courtier; and, notwithſtanding his profeſs'd Principles, has all the fiery and uncharitable Spirit of an Inquiſitor.

How unhappy is it, that by Education, Paſſion, Party, or any other Conſideration, a good Man ſhould be tranſported and miſled from the Rule of Good and Juſt; ſhould give the Lie to his own Doctrine, and propagate Scandal and Falſehood for GOD and CHRIST's Sake!

How obſervable is the Conduct of the Sacred Hiſtorians in this Reſpect! They make no Reflections on Perſons or Things, however blameable. The Reader is generally left to

form his own Judgment of Men from their Actions, related in plain Colours, without Exaggeration or Detraction, Surmize or Conjecture. From *Cain* to *Judas* I remember few or no Characters described in any other Manner, than by the Facts ascribed to them in the Course of the History. The longest Character in *Scripture* scarce exceeds a Line, or a Verse; and in which you perceive not one Stroke of Prejudice or Partiality to favour or blacken any Man mentioned. Reports, Suspicions, or sinister Insinuations have here no Place. The Writers intrude not upon you with their Comments, and indeed never appear. Their Design seems plainly to have been to inform others, not to display themselves: And here they have been remarkably successful: You are wholly intent upon the Story, not the Authors. From hence we may easily judge by what Spirit they wrote.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

OF Kin to this Malevolence of Temper in our Author, is that Irony and Scurrility, Satyr, Raillery, and abuſive Wit, which every where abound in the Mouths of his Speakers. " Raillery, ſays a very polite Wri- " ter, is a Fault, which very witty Men are " ſeldom wiſe enough to ſhun [h]." And never Author gave a fuller Proof of the Truth of this Obſervation, than *Tacitus*. The Troops ſneer their Generals: The Subjects their Prince: The Senate their Emperor: Commanders fight Tongue-Battles; and the Soldiers on both Sides are frequently as ſcurrilous as their Leaders.

To give a few Inſtances in Proof of this Charge againſt *Tacitus*.

The Speech of *Arminius* is ſneering, ſatyrical, and witty quite through [i]. The Speeches of *Germanicus* and *Arminius* to their Armies before Engaging, are full of Abuſe and Reflections upon each other; particularly that of *Arminius* [k]. This General again encou-

[h] Obſervations on the Life of *Cicero*, p. 55.
[i] Ann. 1. 59. [k] *Ibid.* 2. 14.

raging the Battle againſt *Maroboduus*, is quite ſcurrilous and abuſive: *Neque Maroboduus probris in hoſtem abſtinebat* [l]. *Caractacus*, animating his Troops, is ſatirically witty [m]. The wretched and cowardly Troops of *Pætus* are witty and ſneering upon the Surrenders at *Caudium* and *Numantia*, tho' they were going from theſe Precedents to take the ſame Meaſures [n]. *Nero*, inſtead of puniſhing *Pætus* for Cowardice and ill Conduct, only laſhes him with ſarcaſtical Raillery [o]. *Otho* and *Vitellius* are repreſented *rixantes & ſtupra & flagitia invicem objectantes* [p]. Their different Armies reproach each other, and are animated in the Fight, not by applauding or remembring the Virtues of their Emperors, but by the abundant Infamy each Army found to reproach the General with againſt whom they fought [q]. *Cæcina* and *Valens*, tho' both of one Side, ſneer and traduce each other [r].

The *Parthians* are maliciouſly witty againſt their new King *Venones*, and call him *Mancipium Cæſaris* [s]. *Piſo* is ſcurrilous

[l] Ann. 2. 45. [m] *Ibid.* 12. 34. [n] *Ibid.* 15. 13.
[o] *Ibid.* 15. 25. [p] Hiſt. 1. 74. [q] *Ibid.* 2. 20.
[r] *Ibid.* 2. 30. [s] *Ibid.* 2. 2.

againſt

againſt the *Athenians*, and objects to them their unſucceſsful Attempts againſt the *Macedonians*, and the cruel Uſage of their own brave Citizens [t].

This is truly hard upon them; for with the ſame Breath, he will not allow them to be the Poſterity of the ancient *Athenians*, but calls them "the Scum of Nations [u]." When *Piſo*'s and *Agrippina*'s Fleets meet, *Tacitus* prepares us for an Engagement, but it ends in a ſcolding Bout [w]. Upon *Plancina*'s being ſkreened from her Proſecutors on the Part of *Germanicus*, one would have expected good Men mourning (as our Author ſometimes repreſents them naturally enough [x]) upon ſo melancholy an Occaſion; but we find them bitter, poignant, and ſatirical in their Reflections on the Emperor and his Mother [y]. Upon the Revolt of the *Gauls* being reported at *Rome*, you find the Citizens moſt wantonly witty againſt *Tiberius* [z]. When he begs the Queſtorſhip for *Nero*, the Son of *Germanicus*, before the Legal Time, he is laugh'd at by the Hear-

[t] Ann. 2. 55. [u] *Ibid.* [w] *Ibid.* 2. 79.
[x] — *Optimus quiſque reipublicæ cauſâ mærebat.* Ann. 3. 44.
[y] Ann. 3. 17. [z] *Ibid.* 3. 44.

ers. —— *Non ſine in riſu audientium poſtulavit* [a]: Tho' this is a little ſurpriſing, that the Senate ſhould be ſo familiar with this ſanguinary Tyrant; and ſtill more ſurpriſing, that this ſame Senate ſhould be ſoon after repreſented attending with many Tears to this ſame Tyrant, when recommending *Druſus*, and this very *Nero* to their Protection [b]. *Druſus*'s Letter, tho' modeſt and ackowledging the Honour of the Tribunician Power conferred upon him, is receiv'd as the proudeſt; and the Reflections ſuppos'd to be made upon this Occaſion, are ſevere and ſatirically bitter [c]; tho' the Vices of this Prince had but a few Chapters before been palliated by theſe ſame Reflecters, in order to expoſe the greater Crimes of the Emperor his Father [d].

The Reflections upon *Nero*'s Youth and Incapacity, are cutting and witty [e]. *Poppea* ſarcaſtically reproaches him, and calls him *Pupil* [f]. The ſame *Poppea* can afford *Octavia* no better a Character than "The Adultereſs of an *Egytian* Minſtrel [g]." *Agrippina*, the Mother of *Nero*, in the Height

[a] Ann. 3. 29. [b] *Ibid.* 4. 8. [c] *Ibid.* 3. 59.
[d] *Ibid.* 3. 37. [e] *Ibid.* 13. 6. [f] *Ibid.* 14. 1.
[g] *Ibid.* 14. 61.

of

of her Rage and Reſentment is maliciouſly witty and ſcurrilous. — " She would go to " the Army with *Britannicus*; where on " one Side would be heard the Daughter of " *Germanicus*; on the other, *Burrus* and *Se-* " *neca*; the firſt with his maimed Hand, the " ſecond with the Style of a Pedagogue, con- " teſting with Her the Sovereign Rule of " human Kind [h]."

Agrippina, the Wife of *Germanicus*, in the Height of her Grief, and *Sabinus*, when dragg'd to Execution, are both maliciouſly witty againſt *Tiberius* [i]. Tho' our Author lays it down as a Maxim, in this very Caſe of *Sabinus* — *Molles ſunt in calamitate mortalium animi* [k].

In the Debate amongſt *Galba*'s Friends, Whether he ſhould go forth of his Palace to oppoſe *Otho* or not, You have Maxims of Policy, and excellent Reaſons on both Sides: And yet in this very momentous Conſultation is found Room for Sneer and Irony [l].

It would be tedious to obſerve how frequently the Speakers in *Tacitus* treat each

[h] Ann. 13. 14. [i] *Ibid.* 4. 52. 70. [k] Ann. 4. 68. [l] Hiſt. 1. 32, 3.

other *obliquâ inſectatione*; and how often this Phraſe occurs. If ſome of our Author's Commentators had better underſtood his Manner and Temper, they would not have attempted, as ſome of them have done, to alter the Text as ſpurious; and ſubſtituted, inſtead of *OBLIQUA, OBLITA inſectatione:* Which is a Phraſe I remember not to have ever met with in any *Roman* Writer.

CHAP.

CHAP. VI.

AFTER this harſh and unfavourable Account of *Tacitus*, it may reaſonably be aſk'd, wherein his Excellency lies, and whence comes it, that his Writings have been the Study of Scholars, a Leſſon for Stateſmen, and the Delight of Kings?

I anſwer; his refined Wit, Sagacity, and Turn for Politicks; or his general Obſervations on Men and Things, have been the Cauſe of his being ſtudied and admired.

And even here, conſider'd as a Writer of Annals or Hiſtory, I think, he has given great Room for Cenſure, and is very juſtly blameable. Many of the Obſervations are evidently his own, and not theirs, to whom they are aſcribed; many of them quite inconſiſtent with the Characters they are given to; and many of the Actions he relates might, and probably did, proceed from other more natural Motives, and Principles leſs refined, than thoſe aſſign'd by the Author.

Tiberius, we are told, turn'd to his own Glory, and aſcribed to himſelf as meritorious, even Chance-work or Accident. Thus our

our Author politically refines upon common Contingencies: You every where meet with Art, Deſign, ſiniſter Motives, falſe Pretences, and ſubtle Reaſons. He allows nothing to what we call Chance and Fortune; they have ſcarce a Place in his Writings, except where they are admitted to govern the World. All is deduc'd regularly from a Chain of human Cauſes, and even Death is ſcarce permitted to exert the Right of Nature without a Poiſon. " Reaſon goes before every " Enterprize, and Counſel before every Ac- " tion." Every Sex and Age, all Profeſſions, People of all Conditions and Quality, Barbarians as well as Greeks, Bond, and Free, are all Wits or Politicians. Every Mouth that opens is an Oracle of Wiſdom. Upon the moſt improbable Occaſions, where the Diſtreſs is ſignal, the Time tempeſtuous, the Paſſions in a Ferment, you have Politicks, Morals, Proverbs, Wit, and Epigram.

Moſt of *Tacitus*'s Princes are eminent Speakers, and deep Politicians; but, I think, with ſome Impropriety, and to the Diſcredit of the Author, who muſt needs ſhew his Wiſdom upon all Occaſions, tho' at the Expence of Truth and Decency.

We

We allow *Auguſtus* a wiſe Prince; tho' an ingenious Modern would confine his Maxims of Policy to very few in Number[m]. Be this as it will: Our Author's Deſcription of the State of the *Roman* Empire, and the Arts by which this Prince fortified his Dominion and Power, muſt be allowed, tho' in few Words, very full and juſt: And whether the Arts were practiſed by *Auguſtus* or not, *Tacitus* has ſhewn himſelf that great Maſter in Politicks, which he would make this Prince.

Tiberius's Character is indeed wonderfully drawn; and ſuch, I imagine, as *Tacitus* would paint that of the moſt abſolute and artful Tyrant to be; but I cannot believe there ever was ſuch a Character in the World.

A ſhort Sketch of it I ſhall here attempt, as it may be gathered from different Parts of the firſt ſix Annals.

Tiberius commends the Man whom he envies and hates; careſſes and ſmiles on the Man he is going to deſtroy; and laments the untimely Fate of the Perſon he murders; — he loves Diſſimulation, but hates the Diſcovery of it; the greater his Reſent-

[m] Reflections on ancient and modern Hiſtory, p. 20.

ment,

ment, he diſſembles it the more; ſmothers his preſent Paſſion, and hoards it up for future Vengeance; and murders the Man, whoſe Services he is unable to repay; — he hates Flattery, yet fears Liberty of Speech; pretends he would have kept ſilent, what he diſcovers by the Means of others; he loves, and makes Uſe of Informations, yet hates the Informer; whom he preſerves from the Inſults of others, to be deſtroyed by himſelf; — he affects to complain, where there is no Occaſion of Offence; — he abhors Liberty, yet abhors the Betrayer of it; eſtabliſhes Slavery, yet looks with Contempt on the Slave; — puts a Stop to any Meaſures form'd to reſtrain his Authority, under Pretence that they tend to increaſe his Power; — he proſecutes new Crimes under the old Forms; and affects to preſerve the Conſtitution, but it was in the Ceremonial only, while he ſtabs it in the Vitals; and fortifies a real Tyranny, whi'e he allows the Senate a Shadow of their ancient Juriſdiction; nay chides them for caſting all the publick Cares upon him, when it might have been Rebellion and Treaſon to have offer'd to relieve him; — he praiſes the Severity of

the

the Senate with the ſame Breath that he recommends Lenity; not blaming the Man who propos'd the ſanguinary Sentence, yet commending *Lepidus* who oppos'd it.

His Speeches are worthy of the wiſeſt Legiſlator of *Greece*, or the warmeſt Patriot of *Rome*; his Actions more cruel and arbitrary, if poſſible, than thoſe of Eaſtern Tyrants. *Brutus* and *Caſſius* could not ſpeak better; *Domitian* and *Nero* could not act worſe. Conſidering the excellent Senſe and profound Wiſdom, which appear in his Speeches and Conduct, in the Beginning of his Reign, one would almoſt think it impoſſible he ſhould turn out the Monſter he is after deſcribed. He muſt either be not ſo wicked, or not ſo wiſe as he is repreſented. It ſhould ſeem, as if *Tiberius* was indeed the wiſeſt Prince *Tacitus* had to bring upon the Stage; and therefore the propereſt Character on whom to charge all the fine Things he is pleaſed to put in his Mouth.

Yet wiſe and politick as *Tiberius* is repreſented, he has Occaſion for Counſel, that *Salluſtius Criſpus* may be introduc'd with his Politicks[n]; where I cannot help obſer-

[n] Ann. 1. 8.

ving,

ving, that this Advice of his, as alſo many of the wiſe Maxims and fine Things in *Tacitus*, are ſuppos'd to have been given and ſaid in Private; and were *inter arcana imperii:* And it ſeems wonderful how our Author came to ſuch a particular Knowledge of them, unleſs we may ſuſpect, that many of *Tacitus*'s Perſonages are introduc'd on Purpoſe to ſay fine Things, and make ſhrewd Obſervations: If this was not the Caſe, one would imagine, that *Tiberius* and *Livia* wanted not Tutors in Tyranny.

The other Princes in *Tacitus*, tho' of far meaner Abilities than *Tiberius*, are not without their Share of Cunning and political Wiſdom. *Caligula*, tho' acknowledg'd of a tempeſtuous Genius, yet had learned all the hollow Guiſes of Diſſimulation [o].

Claudius is repreſented a weak and inſignificant Wretch, ſtupid and defective in his Underſtanding, the Tool of his Women and favourite Freed-men; yet his Advice to the *Parthians* and *Meherdates*, whom he ſent as their King, is as wiſe as the wiſeſt could give, or the tendereſt Shepherd of his People practiſe [p].

[o] Ann. 6. 45.

[p] *Ibid.* 12. 11.

His

His Speech, in Favour of his new Senators, ſhews him both a Wit, and a Politician [q]. Every Thing is indeed ſaid on both Sides, by them that oppoſe the Admiſſion, and *Claudius* who promotes it, that could poſſibly be ſaid by any Body on the like Occaſion. And the ſame may be obſerv'd of the Debates in *Tacitus* on other Occaſions. The Author's Fund of Materials and Literature is laid out as decently as can be on the oppoſite Parties; and he furniſhes both Sides ſo plentifully with Reaſons and plauſible Pretexts, that the Reader knows not, from weighing Arguments, on which Side the Right lies.

Nor can it be ſaid in Favour of *Tacitus*, that Princes are but the Mouths of their Miniſters: For in a fair Trial of Skill, we

[q] It muſt be confeſs'd, that ſome Part of *Claudius*'s Speech, or Sentiments of the ſame Kind and Meaning, is to be found in the Inſcription at *Lyons*, which *Lipſius* has tranſcribed into his Excurſions: And thence it may be concluded, that *Tacitus*, in this and the other Speeches, aſcribed to his Princes, follow'd exact Truth. I cannot think ſo; and give this very Speech of *Claudius* as a Proof of the contrary. There is neither the Wit, nor the Sarcaſm in the Inſcription; both which, and of *Tacitus*'s own Turn, are viſible in the Speech he here aſcribes to *Claudius*.

find

find the Royal Pupil *(Nero)* an Over-match for his Tutor and Minister, *Seneca*; tho' the Philosopher made a premeditated Speech; and the Emperor, whose Want of Elocution was before complain'd of, spoke extempore. Instead of the gay Reveller, we find him here an egregious Stoic[r]; and he is afterwards represented as concealing his Hate and Resentment, under as smiling an Appearance as the hoariest Tyrant of them all[f].

Galba, the Historian, would persuade us, that he was weak and credulous, the Property of rapacious Ministers and selfish Favourites; yet his Speech to *Piso*, upon adopting him his Successor, is full of the justest and wisest Maxims that can be well imagin'd, or conceiv'd[t]. *Seneca* could not with more Truth and Wisdom have instituted his Royal Charge; nor *Plato* himself taught the *Sicilian* Tyrant a finer Lesson. 'Tis a Composition of good Morality, good Policy, and good Philosophy; and, I think, far from the real Character of *Galba*, if what *Tacitus* says of him upon another Occasion be true——

[r] Ann. 14. 12. [f] *Ibid.* 14. 56.
[t] Hist. 1. 14. 56.

Quod

Quod segnities [*in* Galba] *erat, sapientia vocabatur*[r].

Piso, whom he had adopted, though the Time between his Adoption and Murder, was but a very few Days, must be brought upon the Stage, to shew what an Adept in Politicks he was: And indeed the Speech he makes is a most glorious one[f]: *Tacitus* makes him speak once for all. But I cannot help thinking, that the Reflections are too philosophical, cool, and abstracted for the Confusion attending such a Commotion [*turbidis rebus*] wherein the Empire is transferred.

Otho's Resolutions of attempting to seize the Empire, I should say, his Thoughts about it (for those, 'tis plain, our Author knew perfectly well) are wise and politic, and proper in his Circumstances, and had the Cause he was ingaged in been righteous, great and glorious[t]. He reasons like the deepest Politician, and resolves with a Greatness of Soul becoming *Alexander* or *Cæsar*. *Mortem omnibus ex natura æqualem, oblivione apud posteros vel gloria distingui*: Thus the gallant *Sarpedon*, in *Homer*.

[r] Hist. 1. 49. [f] *Ibid.* 1. 32, 33, 34. [t] *Ibid.* 1. 21.

Since Age, Diſeaſe, or ſome leſs noble End,
Tho' not leſs certain, doth our Days attend:
Since 'tis decreed, and to this Period lead
A thouſand Ways, the nobleſt Path we'll tread;
And bravely on, till they, or we, or all,
A common Sacrifice to Honour fall [n].

The Reader will judge whether ſuch Thoughts are becoming the Character of a Man, who, in the next Chapter, is repreſented as One paſſionately fond of the Allurements of a Court, the Delicacy of Revelry, the Choice of Wives, the Choice of Women, and unbridled Wantonneſs and Exceſs. *Tacitus* ſaw the Inconſiſtency of ſuch great Reſolves with ſuch a Character, and ſo by Way of Apology, ſays, *Non erat Othoni mollis & corpori ſimilis animus.* But his whole Life gives the Lie to this Remark, and proves him to have been miſerably debauch'd.

His Speech in the Camp ſhews him a moſt conſummate Politician, Patriot, and Philoſopher: Some of the Thoughts are ſurprizingly great, and ſeem much too refined and philoſophical for the Speaker, the Au-

[n] *Il.* 12. Sir *John Denham.*

dience,

dience, or the Occaſion. They might have become the *Areopagus*, or a *Roman* Senate, in the moſt virtuous Æra of the Republic[w]. Yet this is that ſame *Otho*, who is afterwards repreſented, upon the Compariſon with *Vitellius*, as *Luxu, Sevitia, Audacia reipublicæ exitioſior*[x].

Vitellius is deſcribed as having *ſegne ingenium*; yet preſently he ſtarts up Wit and Politician; for upon hearing of the Revolt of the Legions in higher *Germany*, he concludes *minore diſcrimine ſumi principem quam quæri*[y]: which whoever ſees not to be the Author's own Wit, muſt confeſs he knows Nothing of *Tacitus*'s Manner. Again, when he is acquainted with the Revolt of the firſt Legion from him, he ſuppreſs'd the Name of *Veſpaſian*[z]: and ſent for Aſſiſtance from *Britain*, *Germany* and the *Spains*, *ſegniter & neceſſitatem diſſimulans*[a].

The youthful *Titus*'s Deliberations, whether he ſhould proceed to *Rome*, or not, upon the News of *Galba*'s Death, are as wiſe as the wiſeſt could imagine or form[b]; and tho' gay and amorous, in his Advice

[w] Hiſt. 1. 83, 4. [x] *Ibid.* 2. 31. [y] *Ibid.* 1. 56.
[z] *Ibid.* 2. 96. [a] *Ibid.* 2. 97. [b] *Ibid.* 2. 1.

to his Father, he is as grave a Moraliſt, and as ſententious, as the ſageſt Stateſman or Philoſopher in *Tacitus*[c]. The Advice had come much better from a Father to a Son. Here, as in ſeveral other Parts of his Works, our Author has imitated *Saluſt. Non legiones, non claſſes*, ſaith *Titus*, *perinde firma imperii munimenta quam numerum liberorum*, &c. In *Saluſt* it is: *Neu malis alienos adjungere, quam ſanguine conjunctos retinere. Non exercitus neque Theſauri præſidia regni ſunt verum amici*[d]. But here it is the aged *Mecipſa*, who, with Propriety and Decency enough, gives the Advice to the young Princes.

We need not then wonder at the wiſe Reflections and juſt Meaſures taken by the Father *Veſpaſian*, and his General *Mucianus*, to wreſt the Empire from *Vitellius*.

Veſpaſian's private Reflections are very politic for a military Man[e]; whence *Tacitus* knew his private Doubts and Deliberations, I am ignorant: But his wavering I can eaſily account for, *viz.* That the Hiſtorian might more plauſibly introduce *Mucianus* to make his celebrated Speech to over-rule theſe Doubts

[c] Hiſt. 4. 52. [d] p. 70. Ed. *Oxon.* [e] *Ibid.* 2. 74, 5.

of

of *Veſpaſian*. Had *Mucianus* made this Speech in Private (tho' our Author for Decorum's Sake allows he had much Diſcourſe, no Doubt to the ſame Purpoſe, with *Veſpaſian* in Secret) *Tacitus* could not ſo properly have given it us in its full Length and juſt Proportion; therefore we have *Mucianus* ſpeaking in Publick (*coram*) to overrule *Veſpaſian*'s private Scruples.

Sir *H. Savil* has a Remark, not unſuitable to the foregoing, and which ſhews that he ſaw plainly into this Foible of *Tacitus*. "Having ſet forward *Mucianus* in his "Way, here he returneth again to talk of "the Preparation ſomewhat diſorderly, and "peradventure to draw in that Saying of "*Mucianus, Pecunias eſſe belli civilis ner-*"*vos*[f]."

Upon Occaſion of this fine Harangue of *Mucianus*, I would obſerve, that all, or moſt of the Speeches in *Tacitus*, let who will be the Speakers, are pretty much in the ſame Style: Abound with Wit, fine Thoughts, and deep Reflections. I may add, that the Wit is pretty much of the ſame Caſt; has moſtly an Epigrammatical Turn, and a very

[f] Sir *H. Savil*'s Tranſlat. Hiſt. 2. 24. Note.

comprehenſive Conciſeneſs: As his Wiſdom is frequently the Oſtentation of a Philoſophy pompous and ſounding, rather than juſt and natural; and the Policy more refined than the common Courſe of Men and Things admits.

The Wit, the Philoſophy, and Policy are generally all his own; different Characters could never have ſpoke and acted with that Sameneſs and Uniformity; for 'tis not to the *Roman* Emperors alone, and their prime Miniſters, that this political Wiſdom is aſcribed: Barbarian Princes are as great Maſters of the Craft as the *Roman:* Generals are as witty and well-ſkill'd in the Myſteries of the Cabinet as the Camp: The common Soldiers reflect as Subtilty as their Commanders; and the Mob upon Occaſion may diſpute the Prize of Wiſdom with them all.

The young *Rhadamiſtus* is more cunning than his Uncle *Mithridates* [s].

The political Remark of *Tiridates* very well deſerves our Conſideration; *Id in ſumma fortuna æquius quod validius: ſua retinere privatæ domus, de alienis certare re-*

[s] Hiſt. 2. 44.

giam

giam laudem esse[h]. Does not this Policy seem too greatly wicked for a barbarous Prince, or at least highly improper from the Mouth of one deprived of his own Kingdoms? *Tiridates, regni profugus.* 'Tis the Policy of Hell, of *F——*, or of *Tacitus.*

The two Kings *Rhescuperis* and *Cotys* live in a hollow and dissembled Friendship[i]. *Izotes*, King of the *Adiobeni*, is a false and double Character[k]. *Cartismunda* is instructed *callidis artibus*[l]. *Civilis* is *ultra quam barbaris solitum ingenio solers, — ultra barbaros sagax, — & dolo grassandum ratus — & arte donisque*[m]. These are Softenings in their Characters, to make the Politicks of these Barbarians more decently pass with the Reader.

Civilis's Speech in Favour of Liberty, and to rouze the *Gauls* to shake off the *Roman* Yoak, has in it all the Policy, Wit and Irony, so peculiar to *Tacitus*[n].

Valentinus and *Tutor* act the Part of *Achitophel*, in making *Absalom* lye with his Father's Wives: They slay *Herennius* and *Nu-*

[h] Ann. 15. 1. [i] *Ibid.* 2. 64. [k] *Ibid.* 12. 13.
[l] *Ibid.* 12. 40. [m] Hist. 4. 13—16, 17,—29.
[n] *Ibid.* 4. 17. 32.

miſſus, Commanders of the Legions; thence to ſtrengthen the common Band of Iniquity and Guilt, by precluding all Hopes of Pardon[o].

Ilatus's Arrival among the *Germans* was very agreeable to that People: But too popular to pleaſe the Factions who deſert him: Upon which, *Ilatus*'s remaining Friends make this wiſe Remark; *falſo libertatis vocabulum ab iis uſurpatum, qui privatim degeneres, in publicum exitioſi, nihil ſpei niſi per diſcordias habeant*[p]: A general Obſervation, and applicable to the Factious in all States; but would have been peculiarly proper in the Mouth of One, who had ſeen the civil Diſcords in the *Roman* Republick, and the Heads of them, *Anthony*, *Clodius*, and *Cæſar*.

Thus the *Germans* reflect upon the Capitol being burnt in a Style and Manner, which would appear much more natural and familiar to a ſuperſtitious *Roman*: *Captam olim à Gallis urbem, ſed integra Jovis ſede manſiſſe imperium; fatali nunc igne ſignum cœleſtis iræ datum*[q]. — Much in the ſame Manner *Tacitus* himſelf reflects upon a like

[o] Hiſt. 47. 70. [p] Ann. 11. 17. [q] Hiſt. 4. 54.

Occaſion,

Occaſion. *Id facinus poſt conditam urbem luctuoſiſſimum fœdiſſimumque — Sedem Jovis Opt. Max. auſpicato à majoribus pignus imperii conditam, quam non Porſena dedita urbe oreque Galli capta, temerare potuiſſent* [r].

Thus too the *Tenctenians*, ſending a Deputation to the People of *Cologn*, deſire them " to reſume the native Inſtitutions of *Ger-* " *many*; by ſhaking off all foreign Luxury " and Voluptuouſneſs; to which, ſay our De- " puties, the *Romans* owe much more than " to their Arms, the Eſtabliſhment of their " Power over ſubdued Nations [f]." Thus you have Barbarians reflecting on the Vices and Arts of Government practis'd by the *Romans*, as acutely as our Satyriſt and Politician could himſelf have done.

In aſſum'd or fictitious Characters, it is very difficult, if not impoſſible, to preſerve Decorum and Nature. This is very obſervable in Books, daily publiſh'd among us as of foreign Extraction: For Inſtance, in the *Perſian Letters*, the *European*, notwithſtanding all his Art and Ingenuity, plainly diſcovers himſelf. A critical Acumen, a political Sagacity, and a

[r] Hiſt. 3. 72. [f] *Ibid.* 4. 64.

ſatyrical

ſatyrical Vein exercis'd on Characters, Manners, and Meaſures of Government, plainly betray a Writer familiar with his Subject, and attach'd or oppos'd, through Paſſion, or Intereſt to ſome Opinions and Practices in Vogue; and not a cool and diſtant Spectator.

All that can be ſaid in Defence of *Tacitus* is, that few Writers have been able to diveſt themſelves of ſome peculiar Caſt in their Compoſitions. His own favourite Opinions, Studies, Complexion, or Paſſions, are apt imperceptibly to ſteal upon an Author, and ſhew themſelves, in ſome Shape or other, where the Impropriety is obvious to every conſiderate and diſpaſſionate Reader.

In every *Eclogue* of *Virgil*, I think, you have Philoſophy, or Sublimity: In the *Æneid*, *Euryalus*'s Mother laments as pompouſly as *Andromache*, or *Hecuba* could do; and the Hero *Æneas* is as poetical as the Poet himſelf could be. The virtuous Soul of *Fenelon* is transfus'd into his amiable Adventures of *Telemachus*. And thus, if I might, without offering Violence to the Manes of Mr. *Addiſon*, I ſhould ſay, that in his *Cato* you read his own fine Senſe, excellent Morality, and poliſhed Language. 'Tis over-crowd-

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ed with Sentiment and Philoſophy, and too elegant and beautiful even for *Cato*, and much more for his Daughters, ſhould you allow them a far longer Time to moralize in; much leſs can we imagine ſo many juſt Truths and ſhining Thoughts to have occurr'd within the Period of the Drama. 'Tis however happy, when Genius is thus exerted in the Cauſe of Virtue: The Impropriety ſuch Writers commit, is amply made Amends for by the Improvement they occaſion. Their Deviation from the Rules of Art, is perhaps a Virtue, as human Nature is ennobled by ſuch Productions. 'Tis a more fatal and unpardonable Error, when the Wickedneſs of an Author's Heart is diffus'd in his Writings, and ſtains the Characters and Actions he has to deal with: Thus not only the gay, redundant Wit, but the lewd Diſpoſition of *Ovid* appear in the Conduct and Converſation of his Gods. Such Writers fall under a double Cenſure; as both tranſgreſſing the Rules of Art, and promoting the Cauſe of Immorality.

Tacitus at preſent ſtands charged only with the firſt of theſe: Politicks, being his favourite Study, have tainted moſt of the Characters and Tranſactions he meddles with. His Generals,

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it has been before obſerved, are politic and artful, and fitter for the Cabinet than the Camp. The military Affairs he relates, are frequently carried on by Craft and Policy, not by Virtue and Courage. *Druſus*, it is ſaid, reaped no ſmall Glory from ſowing Feuds among the *Germans* [t]. *Corbulo*'s Conduct is politically modelled [u]. If he attacks, he attacks *Dolo* [w]. *Suetonius Paulinus* is *militaris rei callidus* [x]. *Cecina*, *Spurinna*, *Valens*, and *Titus Vinius*, are all Politicians. *Quadratus* and his Officers, in Council about the Death of *Mithridates*, whether it ſhould be revenged, and his Kingdom recovered out of the Murderers Hands, ſhew themſelves expert Politicians. *Paucis*, ſays the Annaliſt, *Decus publicum curæ*, *Plures tuta diſſerunt*. *OMNE NEFAS EXTERNUM CUM LÆTITIA HABENDUM, SEMINA ETIAM ODIORUM FACIENDA.— Potiretur Rhadamiſtus male partis, dum inviſus, infamis; quando id magis ex uſu quam ſi eum gloria adeptus foret* [y].

Upon other Occaſions, you find the Generals in *Tacitus*, notwithſtanding their Wiſ-

[t] Ann. 2. 62. [u] *Ibid.* 14. 23. [w] *Ibid.* 11. 19. [x] Hiſt. 2. 31. [y] Ann. 12. 48.

dom,

dom, diſtracted with Variety of Views, and uncertain what Meaſures to purſue, from the Number which the Writers Imagination ſupplies them with.

Nay, the Legions ſometimes talk as proverbially, and act as craftily as their Generals[z].

Part of the Horſe, in the Army that attacked *Rome* in Favour of *Veſpaſian*, were thoſe who had been of *Vitellius*'s Party, and had ſurrendered to *Veſpaſian* at *Narnia*. Theſe were thought, according to our Author, not hearty in the Engagement,— as warily watching for what Side Fortune would ultimately declare[a].

Now this ſeems too refined and deſigning for particular Men in a general Attack upon an Enemy, to expect from that Enemy a Diſtinction of Favour from pleaded Treachery to the Party they had eſpouſed, or pretended Affection to the Party they had deſerted.

But even Barbarian Troops are ſo cunning and politic, as to betray and deſert at the very Article of Time of moſt Conſequence, as bidding faireſt for higher Merit and greater Reward[b].

[z] Hiſt. 1. 62.—2. 28.—4. 24. [a] *Ibid.* 3. 79.
[b] *Ibid.* 4. 18.

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The Attack of the Capitol by *Vitellius*'s Troops, was begun and carried on with Rage: The Soldiers are described *furens miles, nullo duce, sibi quisque auctor:* And *Vitellius* complains, that their Impetuosity was beyond Bounds and Restraint[c]: Yet these same mad Troops *neque astu — indigebant*[d].

The Citizens as well as Soldiers, reason and distinguish, and are frequently as sagacious as *Tacitus* himself could be in giving Reasons for both Sides of a Question[e].

The Passions, which are the most natural and undisguised Part of the human Conduct, are in our Author laid under Rules: And this too in Characters, where Hypocrisy cannot well be suspected.

Octavia, though raw in Years, and present at her Brother's being poisoned, is represented as hiding under Dissimulation her Grief and Tenderness, and every other Affection of her Soul[f]. So deep a Dissimulation in the female Sex, and in these tender Years, had better become a Privy-Counsellor, old and experienced in the Mysteries of Court-Villainy. *Burrhus* himself, when he saw his Royal Master mount

[c] Hist. 3. 70, 71. [d] *Ibid.* 3. 73. [e] Ann. 13. 7.
[f] *Ibid.* 13. 16.

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the Stage, and turn Songſter, acted not a more courtly Part. *Aderat mœrens Burrus ac laudans*[g].

When the Daughter of *Sejanus* is dragged to Execution, though no Politician indeed, yet ſhe ſhews a Judgment and rational Diſcernment of the Impropriety of her Puniſhment, which is by no Means childiſh, but rather makes the Writer appear ſo: She cries, *ſe poſſe puerili verbere moneri*[h].

Perſes's Children, as I think it is related in *Livy*, when led in Triumph through the Streets of *Rome*, moved the greater Pity as they were inſenſible of the Greatneſs of their Miſery.

When *Joſeph* was ſtripped of his Coat, and under Expectation of Death from his Brothers, you have none of his Lamentations, Tears, or Deprecations, for a milder Fate more ſuited to his Years; tho', in another Part of his Story, upon the moſt natural Occaſion, we are acquainted with his "Intreaties to his Bre-"thren, and the Anguiſh of his Soul[i]."

The Son of *Julius Manſuetus*, having ignorantly ſlain his Father, fighting under different Banners, upon the Diſcovery of his Deed, ſupplicates the Manes of his Father "to be

[g] Ann. 14. 15. [h] *Ibid.* 5. 9. [i] Gen. 42. 21.

atoned

" atoned, and not to hold him in Horror as " a Parricide ;" adding, *Publicum id facinus : & unum militem quotam civilium armorum partem ?* Upon which, *Acidalius*, one of our Author's Annotators, obſerves, *Ut hæc verba ſuo loco ſint nunquam credam : Non convenit ſtomachatio iſta lamentanti & lacramanti filio :* And ſo by a bold Tranſpoſition, and without the leaſt Authority, he alters the Text, and puts this Reflection into the Mouths of the Soldiers.

The Commentator was miſled by not duly conſidering the Manner and Character of his Author, intemperately fond of Moralizing and Politicks.

There is ſurely an evident Impropriety in putting ſo many Reflections, fine Thoughts, and wiſe Obſervations, in the Mouths of all, or moſt of his Speakers. The Obſervations are ſuch as have been form'd by the wiſeſt Stateſmen and Philoſophers, upon long Experience, and the deepeſt Inſight into human Nature; by ſuch who were great Maſters of ſpeculative Science, as well as vers'd in Action, acquainted with Books as well as with Men ; of great acquired as well as natural Abilities, and converſant in the Schools, as well as

as the Camp and Cabinet of Princes[k]. But *Tacitus*'s Speakers, one would imagine, were all born Philosophers, Patriots, and Statesmen. Extempore, and upon ordinary Occasions, they moralize, reason, distinguish, debate, and conclude with all the Penetration and Wisdom of Sages grown grey in Science, and worn out in Business.

Our Author (to his Honour it must be owned) had large Materials, which made him so lavish of them. This appears further from the numberless Reasons of State which he produces for every Measure taken, or not taken. He sometimes advances such pregnant Arguments on both Sides of a Question, that the Reader is in suspence which Side to approve, till the Event justifies the Measure; though our Author's Ill-nature generally inclines him rather to censure, than approve. Lord *Clarendon*, as I remember, somewhere relating the different Methods of Proceeding proposed in the Prosecution of the same Affair, pronounces both good: But let our

[k] Many of the Maxims and Observations are confirmed by parallel Passages, produced by the Editors and Commentators on *Tacitus*, from *Demosthenes*, *Plato*, *Aristotle*, *Thucydides*, *Polybius*, &c.

Author take either Side of a Queſtion, he will find abundant Reaſons againſt it; and not unfrequently condemns both Sides as wrong. The ſame Degree of Guilt he can find Arguments at different Times to excuſe or aggravate. Such is the Fruitfulneſs of his Invention, and the Redundancy of his Wit, that he can defend the worſt Meaſures, or diſcredit the beſt. A Man, formed upon *Tacitus*'s Principles, would ſcarce know how to act or ſpeak; and would ſee ſo many Reaſons and Dangers on all Sides, as to think it ſafeſt not to act at all. Our Author ſeems frequently to throw Objections in the Way of ſome Action to be performed, or Meaſure to be purſued, or Law to be enacted, that he may diſplay his Eloquence and Penetration on the Side of the Queſtion that is to paſs.

Tacitus not only reaſons too much; but his Reflections ſeem faulty, in being ſometimes not juſt; ſometimes too general.

You have ſometimes big Words, without a Proportion of Senſe or Sublimity: What has the Appearance of a Proverb ends in a Sophiſm; has more Sound than Solidity. He can give any Sentiment or Reflection the Turn of an Apothegm; but upon Examination,

tion, you'll ſometimes find more Wit and Smartneſs than true ſterling Senſe; more of the Epigram and Repartee, than Energy and Strength.

Again, from particular Actions *Tacitus* readily deduces general Rules and Maxims; and ſometimes ſeems to wreſt an Action, in order to introduce ſome political or moral Obſervation, which otherwiſe could have had no Place.

Thus the Horror and Miſery of *Tiberius*, expreſs'd in his Letters to the Senate, are far from being agreeable to his uſual Conduct and Diſſimulation; and ſeem here inſerted to introduce our Author's fine Remark upon the Miſery of guilty Tyrants, borrowed from *Plato*.

Tacitus's Reflections are like his Deſcriptions: Such as you may, and are naturally apt to apply to other Occaſions than thoſe the Hiſtorian is upon. What he ſays of particular Perſons, and on ſpecial Occurrences, may frequently, by altering the Tenſe or Time of the Verb, be formed into general Proverbs[1], equally applicable to other Per-

[1]. What is here cenſured as a Fault is by *Lipſius* eſteemed an Excellency in *Tacitus*. *Singulæ paginæ, quid Paginæ? Singulæ Lineæ Dogmata, Conſilia, Monita ſunt.* Lips. Allocutio iterat. & noviſs.

ſons, other Times, and other Occaſions. Thus the Speech of *Cerialis*, (though he profeſſes himſelf unexerciſed in Speaking) is a Series of Maxims, and political Truths, applicable to all policied States and ſubject Provinces in the World. Almoſt every Sentence may be an uſeful Leſſon to Governors, or the Governed [m].

Our Author is for ever preſcribing, if but a Symptom of Sickneſs appears in the Body Politick; and preſcribing, as if the Diſtemper was at its full Height. He lets ſlip no Occaſion to deſcant and moralize. His Writings are more properly a Deſcription of human Paſſions, their Nature and Effects, than a particular Hiſtory of Men and Things. Very little in *Tacitus* comes under the Character of pure Hiſtory. 'Tis Conjecture, Reflection, Diſſertation, Debate, Eloquence, Politicks, Proverbs, Antiquity, Affectation, Satyr, Sneer, Sarcaſm, and any Thing but Matter of Fact.

Tacitus rather tells you what Men ſhould do, or do in general act in ſuch and ſuch Circumſtances, than confines himſelf to particular Facts as they really were done. You

[m]. Hiſt. 4. 73.

have

have more of Criticism and Comment upon Actions, than an historical Narration of them. The History of Fact is the least valuable Part of the Writings of *Tacitus*, and the least considerable. He chiefly dwells on the Motives and Views upon which any Thing was done, or supposed to be done; seems to delight in blackening the Actor by some invidious Comment of false Steps in the entering upon it, Oversights in the Prosecution, or bad Consequences attending it.

When you expect to know what such a General is doing, our Author will rather tell you what he should have done:— What such a General said; you have what he thought.— How far he contributed to the public Security or Honour of the Empire; you have his private Views, and low ambitious Ends.

And herein I cannot but think our Author greatly blameable, as a Writer of Annals and History, for assigning Causes and Motives of Action, which he must infallibly have been often a Stranger to; and for that general Spirit of Knavery and Artifice, which, were we to judge from his Actors, seem necessary for the carrying on of Business, and to be the very Life and Soul of Policy.

The Motives of Action are often unknown to Perſons living at the very Time of their Performance, and intimately acquainted, as they before imagined, with the moſt intricate Intrigues of State[n]. Yet there are few Actions in *Tacitus*, though remote from his own Times, and upon a Stage far diſtant from *Rome*, but what are perfectly intelligible to him, with all their Motives, as if he had been Privy-Counſellor and General on all Sides.

Many of the Speeches recorded, if any ſuch were ever made, were very likely in private, and therefore difficult to be handed down to Poſterity with ſuch Exactneſs as we find them in our Author.

He knows, or pretends to know, the very Heart and Soul of Man; or rather gives the Thoughts ſuch a political Turn and Sentiment, as was moſt agreeable to his own Genius, ſpeculating at large upon Men and Things.

And herein he ſeems to act, if not a very injurious, yet a very unhappy Part. His Actors, we before obſerved, are moſt, or all of them Politicians; but ſurely the moſt infamous

[n]. See Memoirs de Retz.

Craftſ-

Craftsmen that ever deserved the Character: A double Part is the general Practice; and common Honesty and plain Dealing the greatest Prodigies in *Tacitus*°.

From our Author's Story, and his Manner of treating it, an unexperienced Man would indeed suspect, that Honesty was a dangerous, at least an unnecessary Quality in Business, and most of all so in Courts; and that to be innocent is the Way to be undone: That next to being a Traitor, the surest Way to Preservation is to be cunning enough not to be betrayed. Unguarded Innocence, and undesigning Loyalty to your Prince, proves your certain Ruin. One would imagine, that there is no such Thing as carrying on Business in the plain Way of Truth: That Refinement, Craft, and Artifice are the best, or only Expedients.

Believe our Author's Actors, and form yourself to the World upon their Principles and Conduct, an honest Man would sooner die, than live by such a System. Turn Traitor, or you are betrayed. There is no Faith among Men: (For so one might believe from

° *Vipsanius Messalla*, qui SOLUS ad id Bellum bonas Artes retulit. *Hist.* 3. 9.

the general Infidelity that prevails in *Tacitus* amongſt Perſons united by the moſt ſacred Ties.) Diſtinguiſhed Honours muſt be declined, for Fear of the Envy attending them. Friendſhips muſt be avoided for Fear of being betrayed by them: Innocence muſt be diſſembled for Fear of being undone by it: High Blood, Popularity, diſtinguiſhed Parts, or a diſtinguiſhed Perſon, are all dangerous and pernicious: Diſſimulation muſt be practiſed with Diſſemblers: You muſt purſue with the ſame Artifice with which you are purſued: The beſt Security againſt the Snares of the Guilty is Uſe and Experience in Guilt: Encourage to Villainy, and then betray the Villain you have made: Simple Treachery is but an ordinary Crime: To deſert after Deſertion, and after turning Traitor to betray: —— Theſe are Specimens of that peculiar Perfection of Villainy deſcribed in *Tacitus*.

To one unacquainted with the World and its Ways, that Refinement, Artifice, and Diſſimulation, which make a Part of almoſt every Character in *Tacitus*, have the Air of Craft and Knavery; and a plain Man would have as little Opinion of the Honeſty, as he would have Hopes of the Succeſs of ſuch a hollow

hollow Conduct. Yet our Author's Fame and Credit in the World have chiefly aroſe from his Politicks, in which this Craft and Diſſimulation have ſo large a Share.

Of the ſame Order with our Author in the Rank of Hiſtorians, with Reſpect to this political Fineſſe, is the *Cardinal de Retz*; with this Difference, that the Cardinal is himſelf profeſſedly prime Politician; whereas the Policy of *Tacitus* is diſtributed to different Characters: Himſelf not having Opportunity to diſplay his favourite Talent in ſuch a buſy Scene as the Cardinal was engaged in.

Such Authors may have their Uſe at ſome Times, and upon ſome Occaſions; but there ſhould ſeem no ſurer Proof of private Degeneracy and public Miſery, than ſuch Authors and ſuch Politicks being in Faſhion. They may have their Uſe in Times, when ſelfiſh Views uſurp the Place of public Cares, and Court-Intrigues are more attended to, than national Councils: — When the Stateſman's Schemes are to improve his own, and not a Nation's Welfare; to make his Maſter eaſy, not great or good: — To ſooth the Foibles of the Weak, or gratify the Paſſions of the Wicked, rather than adopt the Schemes,

or

or employ the Virtues of the Wiſe. — They may have their Merit in Times, when low and perſonal Views are the Engines that move, or (which is as often the Caſe) obſtruct the Wheels of Government: — When to make or unmake a Miniſter, to play Knave againſt Knave, and Knave upon Fool: To raiſe and ſupport, or to defeat and take off a Faction: — To riſe to Greatneſs without Goodneſs, to gain Power without Virtue, and carry on Policy without Honeſty: — When this is the Faſhion, and Curſe of the Times, *Tacitus* and the Cardinal are excellent Maſters to diſcipline young Pupils, and ſilence ſcrupulous Conſciences. They are indeed moſt fit for Times of Miſery and Faction, Confuſion and Corruption: — For Times, when true Wiſdom is uſeleſs, Virtue odious, and Honeſty dangerous: — For Times, when Heaven in Vengeance viſits a guilty Nation, ſends a Spirit of Deluſion among a faithleſs People, and permits the Nature of Things to take their Courſe; a Decay of Morals to ſucceed to the Neglect of Religion: Want of Senſe to attend the Want of Morals: And Craft and Corruption to ſucceed to the Want

of

of Wiſdom and Integrity; and Diſappointment and Miſery to cloſe the Scene.

There ſhould not ſeem a greater Proof of the Corruption of human Nature, than that the Experience of near ſix Thouſand Years, ſhould not have taught Mankind that important Truth, "That national Virtue is the "Parent of national Happineſs." The political, as well as the natural Body, by a providential Conſtitution of Things, has Symptoms and Degrees of Health and Sickneſs, a ſtronger or a feebler Pulſe, according to the original Principles of which it is compoſed, and the future Care employed to preſerve it from Decay within, or Violence from without: And Kingdoms, as well as Men, may, by a Debauch, accelerate the fatal Period aſſign'd them by GOD and Nature: But a Nation, without Virtue, can no more ſubſiſt for any Time, than a Body without proper Nouriſhment. Unnatural Principles and artificial Methods, like Phyſic to an effete, but once florid Conſtitution, may, for a while, keep the tottering Fabrick from Ruin; but it muſt at laſt dwindle away of itſelf; or, which is ſometimes the Caſe, fall a Sacrifice to the firſt powerful Invader: As a diſtemper'd Body,

dy, tho' gradually decaying, is often hurried off the Stage by ſome acute Diſorder. It was in Conſequence of national Wickedneſs, that Conqueſt paſs'd ſucceſſively from the *Jews* to the *Babylonians*, *Medes*, *Perſians*, *Greeks*, and *Romans*: As an Inheritance from the defunct Father to the ſurviving Son.

But to return to our Authors, if we may ſeem to have digreſs'd: Should we ſuppoſe them fraught with true Wiſdom, and fitted for all Times and all Occaſions, they cannot from thence challenge the Character of juſt Hiſtorians. The Province of Hiſtory is not profeſſedly to teach Politicks. The Truth of Fact and juſt Compoſition, the Product of an elevated Genius and an honeſt Heart, muſt conſpire to form the finiſh'd Hiſtorian. How far *Tacitus* falls ſhort of this Character may appear from theſe Obſervations: And as for the Cardinal, I cannot ſuppoſe he ever intended his Memoirs for a regular Hiſtory. In his Characters, he brings in ſelfiſh Paſſions and perſonal Endowments, which have no Connection with the Public. His own Amours, private Intrigues, and whimſical Adventures, had been equally impertinent in a Work intended to promote Virtue, to inſtruct Mankind, to inform

inform Princes, and teach Senators Wiſdom. The Principles of Honour he acts upon, and recommends, have ſometimes no Foundation in Honeſty: As his Politicks have frequently no Relation to the common Good. True Greatneſs he makes to conſiſt in being the Head of a Party. In Morals he was a Profligate, and ſhews exceſſive Vanity in boaſting of his Crimes, which he plainly valued himſelf for as an Actor, tho' he affects to diſavow them as a Writer. His chief Virtue is, that he was no Hypocrite: Tho' even his Vanity in boaſting of his Vices and Paſſions, takes off from that better Eſteem we ſhould have had for a ſincere Confeſſion of, and Sorrow for them: But this, in his profligate Way, he would have called a Hotch-Potch of Devotion and Sins. Such a Writer as *Livy*, upon the Compariſon, you would call a good Chriſtian: The Cardinal a bad Heathen: Not ſo much as a Philoſopher, or if a Philoſopher, an Epicurean, or worſe. Yet it muſt be owned, he had a ready Wit, a bright and piercing Genius, and a prodigious Inſight into Men and Paſſions, which he ſeemed to have ſtudied more than Right and Wrong: As the Intereſt of his Party, and the Gratification

cation of his Paſſions, ſeem to have been more his View, than the Good of his King and Country. He has, in ſhort, neither Order, nor Dignity, nor Sobriety, nor Eloquence to perſuade, nor Virtue to improve, nor Goodneſs to charm his Reader: — Is a graceleſs Wit: An unſanctified Church-man: More than *Italian* in Politicks: More than *Frenchman* in Vanity: And a very *Barbarian* in the Love of his Country.

As for his Politicks, which, with Reſpect to their Tendency and Uſe, have brought him under the ſame Cenſure with *Tacitus*, they were really his Practice; the Effect of that Neceſſity, and thoſe Streights, into which Ambition and Faction had brought him; and are not improperly introduced in his Memoirs, ſo far as they made Part of the Hiſtory of Fact, and gave Riſe to, or were the Reſult of his Reflections upon the Commotions of the Times. *Tacitus*'s Politicks had a more imaginary Exiſtence: Such ſanguinary Tyrants, ſuch unreflecting Debauchees as our Author characterizes, ſeem to have had as little Occaſion, as Temper and Diſpoſition, to practiſe a ſpeculative Policy, and carry on arbitrary Power, by artificial Counſels and diſſembled Meaſures.

Meaſures. This the ingenious Writer before quoted obſerves[P]: And as truly adds, "That "*Tacitus* every where characterizes himſelf, "and his own Genius, and not the Perſons "whoſe Actions he deſcribes."

P. See Reflections on Antient and Modern Hiſtory, p. 22, 23.

CHAP.

CHAP. VII.

IF the Policy of our Author was not real, yet the Wickedneſs deſcribed, it may be ſaid in his Defence, was.

It muſt be confeſſed, that many of his Characters were really and eminently bad, and which gave Room for much Cenſure and Satyr: And that his Subject was a miſerable one, which in Part accounts for that Uneaſineſs and Pain with which we peruſe *Tacitus*. His Story, as well as his Manner of treating it, is ungrateful and odious: You read many a Page in *Tacitus*, without finding any Traces of Virtue or public Spirit; without one bright Example, or illuſtrious Action. You are more frequently entertained with Scenes of Adultery and Murder, Debauchery, Oppreſſion, enormous Prodigality, brutal Luxury, unnatural Cruelty, and unnatural Luſt; intermixed with the ſuppoſed Practice of Aſtrology and Charms, Potions and Witchcraft, infernal Arts, Myſteries of Magic, and new Modes of Proſtitution. The Stage is beſides crowded with Informers, Pimps, and Paraſites. All which makes the Reading of

Tacitus

Tacitus an unpleaſant Taſk to a virtuous Spirit. The *Levites*, we are told by ſacred Writ, who had ſeen the firſt Temple, when they ſaw the Foundation of the Second laid, wept with a loud Voice[q]. Thus the Degeneracy of the *Roman* People, the Adulation and Sycophancy of the Senate, with the enormous Cruelty of the Emperors, make us equally curſe the Tyrant and his Flatterers, and with bleeding Hearts call to Remembrance the Glory, the Virtues, and Liberties of old *Rome*.

Man finds and feels a Happineſs in ſeeing other Men happy, and conſequently an equal Degree of Uneaſineſs in beholding other Men miſerable. In reading *Tacitus*, we are deprived of that Sympathy with the Happineſs of our Fellow-Creatures, which is ſo agreeable to the human Soul: We are led to think meanly of the Dignity of human Nature, which we ſee ſo ſadly abuſed and brutaliz'd: We feel not that Complacency in Virtue, which ſeems but to appear, in order to be diſtreſſed. We want that Satisfaction which a Mind ambitious to excell, and fond of true Glory, feels in

[q] *Ezra* 3. 12.

contemplating the Excellencies of others. It is difficult to read *Tacitus*, and not be out of Humour; which I aſcribe to the Prevalency of abominable Wickedneſs there deſcribed, and the perpetual Sufferings of innocent Perſons; while not a *Roman* Soul appears to check the enormous Tyrant:— No ſignal Vengeance from Heaven, to overtake his Crimes, and free the labouring World.

A Reader that comes to *Tacitus* with little Religion would loſe it: If he brings with him Doubts concerning Providence, he will find them not removed, but confirmed. A minute Philoſopher runs the Hazard, by ſtudying this Writer, to commence a ſettled Infidel. But a virtuous Soul feels Agony and Diſtreſs in the Peruſal. A Scene of Miſrule and Confuſion, the Nature of Things perverted, Virtue oppreſſed, Villainy triumphant, Politicks without Honeſty, Nobles without Honour, Women without Modeſty, Senators Slaves; and Slaves Prime Miniſters: Men ſacrificed for their Dreams, executed for their Thoughts; Honours and Rewards the Prize of Infamy; and Infamy and Death the Reward of Merit and Truth:— All theſe ſadly affect a virtuous Mind

Mind, trained up to the Ideas of Order, Beauty, Happineſs and Providence.

His Subject was indeed bad; but ſtill his Manner of treating it makes it worſe. It is not enough that Miſery is the Lot of Innocence; but the Gods, where he is pleaſed to admit them, are either indifferent Spectators of human Maſſacres, or muſt act the Part of Executioners [r]; and be repreſented like *Milton's Moloch.*

——— *beſmear'd with Blood*
Of human Sacrifice and Parents Tears.

Tho' quite Ignorant of the true Syſtem of Nature, he is fond of any Occaſion to philoſophize, and give us his quaint Obſervations of Fate, with all the viſionary Nonſenſe of the latter Aſtrologers. After all the Effuſion of human Blood, and the Sufferings of virtuous Patriots, which he deſcribes, what wretched Comfort is it, to ſend us to invincible Neceſſity, Chance, and the Influence of the Stars, for the Clue to unravel theſe Difficulties in the Moral World [f]?

[r] Ann. 13, 41. ——— 14, 12. ——— 16, 33.
[f] Ann. 6. 22.

As the Diſplay of lawleſs Tyranny by *Tacitus* ſhould excite in every *Engliſhman* a Love for, and an honeſt Zeal to preſerve, that Liberty and Conſtitution by which his Life and Property are ſecured from the bloody and devouring Hands of imperial Villains and their Inſtruments: So ſhould the Philoſophy of this blind Wit, and the Miſery of Man without a God in the World, improve our Eſteem for the Light of Divine Revelation, and the ſacred Writings in which it is convey'd to us. 'Tis a Pleaſure of a different Kind we perceive in reading the *Scriptures*, to what we feel in peruſing any other Hiſtory: —— A Pleaſure more ſublime and intereſting. The Hiſtory of Providence and a Moral Adminiſtration, which is intermix'd with, and indeed makes the chief Part of, the ſacred Story, raiſes us to conſider ourſelves in a happier and nobler Situation than any mortal Circumſtances or human Glory could place us. The Preſence of the Deity, which we have the ſtrongeſt Senſe of while the Bible is our Study, makes us look upon ourſelves in a true Light, as ſomething more than Mortal, of an higher Order of Beings, under more equitable Laws, and a juſter Adminiſtration,

tion, than human Policy can plan, and intended for a more extenſive Duration than Mortality allows. All domeſtic, civil, and temporary Relations, are ſwallowed up in that greateſt of all others — of Creatures and Children of their Father and G O D.

In prophane Hiſtory, but particularly in the Writings of *Tacitus*, Man appears a lonely, independent Being; independent, I mean, of all Aſſiſtance from above, and detach'd from the Care of Providence. He is to ſtand or fall by his own Meaſures, and takes his Chance in the Revolutions of the World, like other natural Bodies. He is indeed connected with Society, and as ſuch, bids fair to have his Share in the Bleſſings or Calamities of his State and Nation. But Society itſelf, upon the Heathen Syſtem (eſpecially in diſtreſsful Times, and impious, unbelieving Ages, ſuch as our Annaliſt deſcribes) was but a poor Security for the Happineſs of Individuals. Bleſſings thus conveyed, were but precariouſly and half enjoyed, and could not with any Certainty be entail'd; while Misfortunes had a double Sting; were bitter to the preſent Senſe, and Melancholy to the future Proſpect.

How diſmal is a World without a God! How wretched Society without Religion! This I think appears moſt plainly from our Author, and the State of Things, which is the Subject of his Writings. The Deductions of Reaſon, and all the ſpeculative Arguments in the World in Defence of Religion as neceſſary to the Support of Society, are needleſs to him that will conſider the Miſery of the Times our Author deſcribes, and withal remembers, that Religion; both with Reſpect to Belief and Practice, was at this Period out of Faſhion at *Rome*. What Wonder then, that good Faith and Morals were alſo fled: That there was no longer found any Obligation in Oaths, any Allegiance to Princes, any Obedience to Laws, any Honeſty in private Life, or virtuous Emulation in Public: But all a Scene of Miſery and Miſrule: The Public and the Private directed as Intereſt, and Power, or Pleaſure prompted: No Man's Life or Property under any Security: Emperors betrayed amidſt their Guards; the Republic forgot amidſt Citizens; *Roman* Glory unknown in its Armies; Fidelity loſt among Friends; in ſhort, no Head, no Heart, no Activity,

Activity, or Wiſdom, but to promote ſelfiſh Ends and infamous Projects?

Nothing but a God admitted on the Stage a Spectator, and Judge of human Action, can give Activity to the beſt, or be a ſufficient Reſtraint upon the worſt of Men. GOD is the Life of the Moral, as well as the Natural World. His Authority alone can exact at the Hands of every Man the conſcientious Diſcharge of his proper Duty; can *bind Kings in Chains*; ſubdue the ſtrongeſt, overawe the boldeſt, and reſtrain the moſt licentious,

Or let Society and Order diſſolve, and give Way to lawleſs Tyranny, or the Madneſs of the People, the Religious Syſtem ſtill affords a happy Retreat to the pious Votary. In the Contemplation of an All-good and All-powerful GOD, the human Heart finds endleſs Matter of Joy and Comfort. The Belief of a Providence that conducts us thro' Life, and in Miſery and Death forſakes us not, gives a more rational Satisfaction than the moſt illuſtrious Fame or extended Fortune.

CHAP. VIII.

WE have thus conſidered the principal Qualities of *Tacitus* as a Writer and an Hiſtorian; and cannot help thinking, that there is a falſe Sublime and Affectation in his Deſcription: A Scurrility and ſatyrical Vein, with two epigrammatical a Conciſeneſs in his Wit; an Acuteneſs, but too ſpeculative, and a Policy over-refined in his Obſervations; a malignant and ill-natur'd Turn in his Characters; a Philoſophy too abſtracted and elevated in his Reaſoners, and a Vanity in his Learning: In ſhort, that he is in Antiquity a Pedant; in the Philoſophy of Nature a Sceptic; in Morals looſe; in Deſcription gaudy and pompous; in Politicks ſubdolous, refined and knaviſh.

He paints more like a Poet than an Hiſtorian. He is ſtill more an Orator than a Poet; more a Moraliſt and a Wit than an Orator; and a Politician more than all.

He is ambitious, but not ſtately; ſtudies to ſay great Things, rather than true; and would make his Piece glare with fine Colours,

lours, rather than natural; or, if he aims at the natural, he ſo overcharges and encumbers it with Art, that you are more ſhocked than pleaſed; and are moſt at a Loſs to find Nature, in his greateſt Endeavours to ſhew it. He frequently ſtrikes and ſurprizes, but rarely moves you in a natural Way; I mean, he ſtrikes the Fancy, but reaches not the Heart; if you are moved, it is generally with his Wit, more than his Story.

And here it muſt be owned, that he has a very fine Wit; and his Expreſſion is frequently very happily adapted to his Sentiment. Sometimes indeed his Senſe is ſo crowded in the Narrowneſs and Sententiouſneſs of the Language, that his Commentators will ſpend twenty Lines in explaining one of the Authors: And it may be obſerved, that Mr. *Gordon* is often obliged to paraphraſe rather than tranſlate. He had no other Way of doing his Author Juſtice, and giving his full Senſe. Sometimes you have fine Thoughts and beautiful Sentiments poured ſo thick upon you, that you are ſurprized, and almoſt bewildered. This is particularly obſervable in the Beginning of his Hiſtory; where he writes with a nobler Spirit, greater Dignity, a more natural

natural Air, and a happier Turn; or, it may be, the Subject has a different Effect upon the Writer as well as the Reader. Satiated with Blood and Miſery, we with Pleaſure reliſh the Scene changed; or, as a different Fortune, Age, and Circumſtances have a proportionable Effect upon the Writer's Mind, the Hiſtorian might be now advanced in Years, in Fortune and Honours. Hence his Style might be more elevated, his Soul more ſerene, and his Compoſition more flowing, juſt and regular.

His Wit is generally ſtriking, deep and piercing; cutting and pointed; and ſometimes really ſublime as Wit can be; for Wit ſtrikes the Fancy, the true ſublime the Soul. An Epigram which *Tacitus* often affects, is incapable of Sublimity. Sometimes his Wit is bold and raſh, and ſpares neither Gods nor Men. Sometimes it has a peculiar Delicacy, as his Satyr has a moſt keen Poignancy.

His Reflections are often more refined than natural; ſhining rather than ſolid; and more ſurprizing than juſt; at the ſame Time, it muſt be confeſſed, that they are ſometimes all theſe together: And nothing has ſpoiled them, but the improper Application to Perſons and Things.

Things. His immenſe Fund of excellent Senſe, is only marr'd by his too great Affectation of ſhewing it upon all Occaſions. This it is that puts him ſo frequently upon debating both Sides of a Queſtion on a Subject, which is often determined in private, in Ages and Countries far remote: This it is that puts him upon the proverbial and ſententious Obſervations, which you frequently meet with on the moſt common Occaſions, and aſcribed to very vulgar Characters: Hence that abſtracted, cool and philoſophical Air, which his moſt paſſionate Actors and Speakers often aſſume. He was himſelf a Wit, philoſophical, and an accurate Inſpector into human Nature: Hence that Wit, Philoſophy, and ſage Obſervation of Men and Manners with which his Writings abound. It may ſeem a Paradox, but is inconteſtable Truth, that at the ſame Time he ſhews himſelf a Man of very deep Senſe, he has ſhewn great Want of it; and where he is moſt excellent, he is often moſt faulty. His Vanity gets the better of his Underſtanding, and if this could dictate bright Thoughts and wiſe Reflections, that would not let him ſee the Propriety of Time and Character, to which his fine Sentiments

and

and Obſervations were applicable; or, ſuppoſing ſuch an inconſiſtent Conduct cannot be aſcribed to the ſame Perſon, it muſt be allowed (which is ſometimes the Caſe) that he did fooliſhly with his Eyes open; imagining that the Brightneſs and Refinement of his Obſervations might dazzle the Eyes of his Readers, ſo as not to let them ſee the Impropriety of their Application (in which he has ſucceeded with many of his Admirers) or, reſolv'd to eſtabliſh his Fame as a great Wit, tho' at the Expence of his Character as a juſt Writer.

Let us conſider this Temper of Vanity when join'd with Malice, and obſerve how it ſhews itſelf in common Life, in Perſons, in other Reſpects, of good Senſe and confeſs'd Abilities.

The Aim of a vain Man is to gain Applauſe: This appears ſo plain, that it often defeats the End propos'd. When a vain Man talks, 'tis not ſo much to inform you, as to diſtinguiſh himſelf: Hence whatever is the Subject, he will ſo manage and adapt it, as to affect, (as he thinks) to ſurprize, to move, and ſtrike his Hearers in an uncommon Way. His good Senſe (which is ſuppoſed) fur-

furniſhes him with Materials for any general Deſcription, which he can dreſs up in the greateſt Pomp; and at the ſame Time will add ſome particular Circumſtance to diſtinguiſh it from other general Accidents and Occurrences of the ſame Kind, which it may be ſuppos'd every Body elſe is acquainted with. And this makes him fonder of the Miraculous, than to dwell on the ſettled Courſe of Nature.

Thus too his Obſervations he lays down as the wiſeſt, and ſuch as he ſuppoſes you before ignorant of. General Maxims upon common Occaſions he has by Rote: But his own have a Refinement peculiar to themſelves, and which are to keep him aloof from the Vulgar. This makes him frequently fonder of the Exception than the Rule; tho' whatever he aſſerts muſt paſs for a Poſition, and an Axiom indiſputable.

As his Aim is Applauſe, he cannot bear with Temper what is advanced by others, leſt he ſhould ſeem inform'd by them: Or if you aſſert an acknowledg'd and uncontroverted Truth, he will tell you, it is old and obſolete; every Body knows it. The ſame Queſtion he will affirm, or oppoſe in different Com-

Companies, to ſhew his ſuperior Talents; and he finds abundant Reaſons, or the Semblance of Reaſons, to defend any Thing he advances, and to contradict and ſupport his Oppoſition to any Thing ſaid or done by another.

As he thus diſputes or blames the wiſeſt Reaſonings or Sentiments of others, to ſet off his own ſuperior Wiſdom; ſo he directly or obliquely detracts from their moral Excellencies, to diſplay his own ſuperior Virtue. This renders his Converſation diſtaſteful, being full of Satyr and Malignity; and gives his Countenance an Air of Aſperity and Malevolence. He wears the Brow of a Critic or an Inquiſitor; or if he ſmiles, 'tis in Diſdain and Contempt: His Eye curſes you; he ſeems to hate all Mankind; he will rarely commend any Man, leſt his own Merit ſhould be leſſen'd by the Competition: Or, if he commends, 'tis either ſomething in a low Character, which undoubtely ſets his own upon the Compariſon in a fuller Light; or, 'tis perſonal Qualities or natural Endowments, where what we call Merit is not imputable; or, 'tis with ſome Exception, or to ſmooth the Way to ſome greater Scandal. But in general,

neral, our vain Man allows little Virtue or Merit, but will detract from every Excellency of the Head or Heart conſpicuous and diſtinguiſh'd, in other Men. Mention *Warburton*'s great Parts and extenſive Learning, he will tell you, and without a Bluſh, that he has neither Genius nor Judgment, and knows nothing of Literature or Antiquity. *Lock!* — A mere Plagiary, who is indebted to the Schoolmen for every Thing that is valuable in his *Eſſay*. *Harvey* — was but the Publiſher of other Men's Diſcoveries; and *Tillotſon* — died poor, becauſe he had no Opportunity of growing rich.

Again obſerve a vain Man in Company; he talks the moſt and hears the leaſt: The ſlighteſt Hint ſets him a going. He makes unnatural Connections, and takes every Opportunity to obtrude his own Obſervations, Travels, Learning, Fortune, or Family, or whatever is the Object of his Vanity. His Diſcourſe from Beginning to End, is the Diſplay of his own Wiſdom and other Men's Folly, Antiquity, Politicks, Morals, News, — all made ſubſervient to his grand Scheme, *viz.* to ſhew himſelf Maſter of deep Erudition, great Virtue, and refined Senſe.

Let

Let him relate a Diſpute, or perſonate the Language and Character of another, he will put into the Mouth of the perſonated Character better Sentiments and Language than ſuch Perſon was Maſter of: He will make Objections and Anſwers in a fuller Light than the Parties concern'd can be ſuppos'd capable of doing; for he ſtudies not ſo much to repreſent them, as himſelf; not ſo much to inform, as to move and affect you; to give you his own Sentiments, rather than the true ones.

After what has been already ſaid of *Tacitus*, I need make no Application of theſe Remarks.

His whole Character would be beſt diſplay'd by taking a Portion of ſome other more unaffected Hiſtory (for Inſtance, the Story of *Joſeph*, before quoted) and modelling it agreeable to his Manner [t]. It may eaſily be conceived how this ſhould be done, tho' none but a Writer of *Tacitus*'s extraordinary Genius could execute it truly.

The Sarcaſm of *Joſeph*'s Brethren, "*Behold this Dreamer cometh*;" muſt be of

[t] Vid. *Strad.* L. 2. Prob. 2. Hiſt. Muret. Pars 1. Prob. fin.

a con-

a conſiderable Length, with a ſtrong Mixture of Wit and Satyr upon both Father and Son.

Reuben's Advice to caſt him into the Pit, muſt have ſome ſuſpicious Circumſtance annex'd to it: He is afraid of the Diſcovery if they Murder him; or, he intends to ſupport himſelf, and undermine his Brothers by *Joſeph*'s Intereſt; or, has a Mind of the ſole Profit in the Sale of him.

Joſeph being ſtript of his Coat of many Colours, muſt be attended with bitter Lamentations, ſoft Entreaties, and an Appeal to their Reaſon, concerning the Impropriety of his Puniſhment: "Why did they not whip "him as a Boy rather than murder him "as a manly Criminal."

The Traffic of the *Iſhmaelites* muſt be largely diſplay'd, with the Nature of the Camels that bore, and of the Soil and Trees which produced their Spicery; with whatever beſides is extraordinary in the natural Productions, or civil Cuſtoms of their Country.

Jacob's Mourning for his Son muſt be aggravated by a Number of Circumſtances, attended with a long Speech, wherein he muſt

accuſe both Gods and Men; and is at laſt with Difficulty reſtrain'd by his Sons and Daughters from killing himſelf.

Upon *Joſeph*'s Arrival in *Egypt*, muſt be related the Natural and Civil Hiſtory of the Country, it's firſt Planting, antient Manners, antient Kings, very antient Gods, and the Revolutions of the State to the preſent Reign.

In the Civil Hiſtory muſt be a great deal of Wiſdom and refin'd Policy diſplay'd: In the Natural, much of the miraculous; in the Religious, much of the myſterious, with quaint Remarks and vain pedantic Explications.

Joſeph's Youth and Beauty, Wit and Parts, muſt be deſcribed with much Elegance and Art; particularly his Innocence, in Order to prepare him for the Sacrifice and unjuſt Suffering. The Adultreſs muſt have an Angel's Face, and every ſoft Endearment, to captivate the innocent Youth. Her Guilt muſt be charg'd upon the Husband, old and impotent: Her illuſtrious Anceſtors, if famed for Guilt or Greatneſs, muſt be commemorated: She muſt be baniſh'd or put to Death, that the

the King's or the Husband's Cruelty may be expos'd.

The Butler's and Baker's Impriſonment muſt be accounted for from ſome Court-Intrigue, or Suſpicion of Conſpiracy, or the Treachery of falſe Friends. Their Offices muſt be deſcribed with their original Inſtitutions, and ſubſequent Regulations. The Criminal executed muſt be in a Rage, and ſcurrilous upon his Enemies: He muſt too be witty, and ſay ſomething ſmart, or great; he muſt die to Fame, and the chief Butler muſt ſurvive to Infamy.

The Phænomenon of Dreaming muſt be accounted for from ſome romantic Falſehoods, ſuperſtitious Ceremonies, magic Rites, and a viſionary Philoſophy.

Joſeph's Advancement, and his firſt Appearance in his State Chariot, muſt give large Field for labour'd Deſcription. The Glory and Wealth of *Egypt* muſt glitter upon this Occaſion; their Officers and Armies muſt make a grand Parade, to compliment the new Minion. The Monarch, weak or wicked, muſt make a Speech full of great, and good, and wiſe Sentiments, upon the Advancement of his new Favourite; and preſently after ſink

into a Cypher; while Noble and Ignoble bow the Knee to *Joſeph*. Yet the Reflections of the People muſt be Satyrical and Sneering upon this Occaſion: Tho' hungry, they muſt be witty; and tho' periſhing, political. Every Soul of them muſt turn *Moral Philoſophers* [u].

[u] See *Morg—n*, Vol. I. p. 239.

OBSER-

OBSERVATIONS

ON

TACITUS.

PART II.

ANother Way of judging of the Merit of our Author, will be by comparing him with another Hiſtorian of the ſame Nation. And this will be the more agreeable, as it affords us an Opportunity to applaud as well as cenſure,

to admire at the ſame Time that we criticize.

A ſhort Character of *Livy* is therefore ſubjoined; in drawing of which, a particular Regard has been had to the foregoing Obſervations on *Tacitus*.

CHAP.

CHAP. I.

LIVY goes not out of his Way to celebrate Places and Perſons famed of old. And where the Occaſion naturally leads him to it, he does it with the greateſt Modeſty and Brevity [a].

Nor does he upon any Occaſion, with a ſerious Air, recite as Truths the Abſurdities of Pagan Theology, or the Fables of Poets and Mythologiſts.

If there is a Place where he is faulty, it is in the Deſcription of the *Mæander*, and the *Marſyas*, which falls into it; whence he takes Occaſion to mention the famed Muſician *Marſyas*, as here challenging the God *Apollo* to contend with him on the Flute [b]. Yet an Admirer of *Livy* might ſay in his Excuſe, that the Occaſion of mentioning this antiquated Story was natural enough; as a *Roman* Conſul was at this Time arrived upon the

[a] *Ubi ſinope dicitur Græca urbs fuiſſe. Vol.* II. *p.* 249. *Ed. Oxon.* — *Thebes campum carmine homeri celebratum. Lib.* 37. 19. *Nephelidæ promontorium* — *inclitum fœdere antiquo Athenienſium. Lib.* 33. 20——34. 28.

[b] *L.* 38. 13.

River *Mæander*. And the Affair of *Marſyas* he but juſt mentions; and mentions as founded on common Fame, without that Air of Seriouſneſs and Importance by which *Tacitus* would engage our Attention to his romantic Digreſſions.

Where he ſeems to digreſs into the *Grecian* Story, he ſhews the Neceſſity of it, from the cloſe Connection the *Grecian* Affairs had with the War, which the *Romans* waged with *Antiochus*[c].

Again, how properly does *Nicander*, Ambaſſador from the *Etolians* to *Philip*, in Order to rouſe him to War, recall to the Memory of the *Macedonian* Monarch defeated, weakened, and abridged of his Power and Empire by the *Romans*, the ancient Deeds of the Kings of *Macedon*, and the World ravaged by the victorious Arms of this Nation[d].

Upon the Reduction of *Syracuſe* by the *Roman* Army under *Marcellus*, the Hiſtorian naturally enough mentions the former For-

[c] *Abſtulerunt me velut de ſpatio res Græciæ immixtæ Romanis: Non quia ipſas operæ pretium eſt ſcribere, ſed quia cauſæ fuerant cum Antiocho belli.* L. 35. 40.

[d] L. 35. 12.

tune

tune of this famed City. But let it be obſerved, that it is not to diſplay his own Erudition, but the Humanity of the Conqueror. And how graceful and generous are the Tears of *Marcellus* upon this Occaſion! From an Eminence he takes a View of the City, at this Time one of the moſt beautiful in the World:— The Scene of ſo many heroic Deeds;— where *Athens* loſt her Navy; where *Nicias* and *Demoſthenes* periſhed with their Armies: The Seal of ſo many potent Tyrants;— where *Hiero* the good and generous lately ſwayed: — He is tranſported with the Thought of his own good Fortune in making ſo noble a Conqueſt; but his Joy is interrupted by a generous and melancholy Reflection, that a Scene of ſo much Glory and Beauty muſt in a Moment be laid in Aſhes; and he burſts into Tears; the Conqueror himſelf ſubdued by Pity, which does but heighten his Glory[e].

Where the Hiſtorian chances (for it is but rare that he does it) to mention any foreign State, or Affairs not purely *Roman*; it is done with ſome natural Connection; the Digreſ-

[e] L. 25. 24.

ſion

ſion is ſhort, and the Return to his Subject immediate [f].

The Digreſſion concerning *Alexander the Great*; and the Author's Conjecture upon the Compariſon of their mutual Strength, what would have been the Event of a War between him and the *Romans*, is ſcarce a Digreſſion; as not only falling in with the Period of his Hiſtory, but as connected alſo with the *Roman* Affairs, and explanatory of them.— Is juſt and beautiful; full of good Senſe, Dignity and Eloquence;— is one of the moſt valuable Paſſages in *Livy*, and is marr'd by nothing (if it is at all marr'd) but by the Author's ſeeming Partiality to his native Soil.

Or, if it muſt be called a Digreſſion, not ſtrictly agreeable to the Laws of Hiſtory, it muſt at the ſame Time be allowed an Ornament; if 'tis a Fault, 'tis alſo a Beauty; if

[f] *EO ANNO Alexandrum epiri regem IN ITALIAM claſſem appuliſſe conſtat: Quod bellum, ſi prima ſatis proſpera fuiſſent — HAUD DUBIE AD ROMANOS PERVENISSET.* *Vol.* II. *p.* 110. *EADEM ÆTAS rerum Alexandri magni eſt, quem ſorore hujus ortum, in alio tractu orbis invictum bellis juvenem fortuna morbo extinxit. CÆTERUM ROMANI, &c.*

our

our Author has tranſgreſſed, yet he may glory in it: He needed not have made any Apology; he deſerves Applauſe: —— The Applauſe due to the Lover of his Country, the manly Reaſoner, and the exalted Orator.

In the firſt Period of his Hiſtory, I think *Livy* had an Eye to the Times in which he lived.

The plain Original, and ſimple Inſtitution of ſome Offices and Games, is deſcribed in order to diſplay the Enlargement of the Office, and the Extravagancy of the Diverſion in After-times.

Thus the Original of Stage Plays is given, and their After-Improvements deduced; not to ſhew the Author's Erudition in Antiquity, but to expoſe the extravagant Expence of theſe Entertainments, arrived, in *Livy*'s Time, from a pious and ſimple Beginning, to an Exceſs, by opulent Kingdoms ſcarce ſupportable[s].

With the ſame honeſt Zeal and Integrity he enlarges upon the primitive Diſcipline both in Peace and War; to expoſe the Degeneracy and Corruption of his own Times, and to ſhew his Countrymen wherein their true Greatneſs and real Liberty conſiſted.

[s] Vol. II. p. 57.

Nay,

Nay, it muſt be confeſſed, that during this firſt Period of his Story, his Reflections, or the Reflections of his Speakers, are ſometimes perhaps too raiſed and magnificent for the Times and the Occaſions; and a Reader, acquainted with the *Roman* Story, will think ſome of them more ſuited to the latter Civil Wars, than to the Diſputes between the Tribunes of the People, and the Patricians. Thus, *Gloria belli penes hoſtes eſt*, is much more applicable to the Defeat of *Craſſus* than to the Incurſions of the *Æqui* and *Volſci*[h]. But ſuch was *Livy*'s Frame, or his Fault if you pleaſe, he could not but be eloquent, he could not but love his Country.

[h] Vol. I. p. 202.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

LIVY's Description is exact and clear, natural and affecting: You see and hear every Thing related by him. You are insensibly conveyed from the Camp to the Senate, from *Sicily* to *Carthage:* With *Annibal* you pass the *Alps* and *Appennine*, and cannot help being affected with the Description of the Region; so that in the very Dog-days the Reader shivers at the Horror of the Picture, and bleak Misery of the Climate.

Livy had, I question not, been upon the *Alps*; and has described them from what he personally knew of them; as he generally describes other Parts of *Italy*, like one particularly acquainted and familiar with every Mountain, Stream, Road and Prospect.

Thus too the State of the War in *Macedonia*, and the geographical Description of the Country, is related as by one who understood perfectly well the Narrowness of every Pass, the Height and Difficulty of every Mountain, the Course of every River, and the Situation of every Port and Garrison in *Greece*.

The

The Diſpoſition of Armies, Supplies of Troops, Recruits raiſed, Diſtribution of the Provinces, Support of Allies, Creation of Magiſtrates, Ceremonies of Religion, the Hiſtorian orders with as much Regularity and Eaſe, as if he had both decreed and executed every Thing himſelf.

He draws up the Line of Battle, marſhals the Troops, gives Orders and executes them, as if he was not an Hiſtorian of a diſtant Age, but a Spectator of what he deſcribes; not a Writer, but an Actor; a Soldier and General on both Sides. The Reader is particularly referred to the Battles of *Thraſimene*, *Cannæ*, and *Trebia*.

In a March, a Retreat, or the Surprize of a City, you ſee every Step taken; and ſee it not as a cool By-ſtander, a Spectator; but cannot help imagining yourſelf a Party in the Action, and are affected with the Paſſions correſponding to the various Turns and Circumſtances of Affairs.

The taking of *Tarentum* by *Annibal* is told with all the Exactneſs of one who had been an Eye-Witneſs, or a Party, in the Execution of this inſidious Meaſure. In *Tacitus*'s Deſcription of a Battle or an Attack by Night,

all

all is Confuſion and Darkneſs, mingled Havock and undiſtinguiſhed Carnage; the Writer is as confuſed as the Scene he deſcribes; and ſhews his Ignorance of all that was done by dwelling ſo much upon Generals in the Deſcription. In *Livy* (as in this Inſtance of the Surprize of *Tarentum*) you have Light in Darkneſs, and Order in Confuſion; the Particulars of the whole Affair being related with all the Clearneſs and Exactneſs that the moſt regular Action could admit. The Part of *Philomenus* here deſcribed is a juſt Example of one of *Livy*'s Excellencies, or what Mr. *Addiſon* calls his ſpecific Qualities. You ſee him go forth with his Dogs and Hunting-Tackle; you ſee him return with his Game; you hear him call; the Watch anſwers; the Gate opens; —— in ſhort, you ſee and hear, and are preſent, and engaged, and engage, in every Part of this Night's Expedition [i].

Livy does not, as indeed he had no Occaſion, aggravate the Paſſions, or aggrandize the Actions he relates. Things ſpeak for themſelves. Tho' *Antiochus*, in the Battle

[i] Lib. 25. 9.

with

with *Scipio* the Conſul, loſt 4000 Horſe and 50,000 Foot, you have not one Word of the Hugeneſs of the Battle. The Diſpoſition of the Troops, and their Number, the Courſe of the Action, the Numbers ſlain, and Priſoners taken, tell us that it muſt be a great Action[k]. But all *Tacitus*'s magnificent Epithets, huge Preparations, Noiſe and Pomp of Deſcription, cannot perſuade us the ſame of his Skirmiſhes.

Upon the Slaughter of the two *Scipio*'s in *Spain*, how ſhort, yet beautiful, is the Deſcription of the Sorrow which this Calamity occaſioned at *Rome*, and in the Province? *Luctus ex morte eorum non Romæ major quam per totam Hiſpaniam fuit: Quin apud cives partem doloris & exercitus amiſſi & alienata provincia & publica trahebat clades, Hiſpaniæ ipſos lugebant, deſiderabantque duces. Cnæum tamen magis, quod diutius præfuerat iis, priorque & famam occupaverat & ſpecimen juſtitiæ temperantiæque Romanæ primus dederat*[l]. How different is this from the tragical Extravagance, or rather the Oſtenta-

[k] Lib. 37. 44. [l] *Ibid.* 25. 36.

tion

tion of Sorrow which we are entertained with in *Tacitus*, upon the Death of *Germanicus?*

The general Deſcription of any ſignal Calamity in *Livy* is not made up of any boyiſh Particulars. Thus, tho' he profeſſes not to be able to deſcribe the Temper of Mind in the People of *Rome* upon the Report of the Defeat at *Cannæ*; yet in few Words, *en paſſant*, he paints the ſuppoſed miſerable and ruined Condition of the Republic, in ſtronger Colours than *Tacitus* would have done by a long and laboured Detail of low Circumſtances. He would have entertained us with particular Inſtances of Miſery and Diſtreſs, when the Public was ſuppoſed loſt; " when " UNIVERSAL RUIN, ſays our Hiſtorian, " was the general Talk: Two Conſuls, two " Armies cut off, the Republic had neither " Camp, General, nor Troops; and *Annibal* " was Maſter of *Italy*. It was *Fabius*'s " Advice, adds *Livy*, that the Women ſhould " not appear in public, and each ſhould be " obliged to keep their own Houſes: — The " Lamentations of Families ſhould be re- " ſtrained, and Particulars wait at Home for " Tidings relating to their private Loſs[m]. "

[m] L. 22. 55.

If you have Exactneſs and Particularity in *Livy*, it is with the utmoſt Propriety, as in *Scipio*'s going on board, and his Voyage to *Africk*. The Importance of the Event makes every Circumſtance conſiderable. The Action was the moſt momentous; and no leſs than the Empire of the World was the Prize of Conqueſt[n]. Beſides, the Time was not improper for ſuch a Deſcription: Peace was made with *Philip* in *Greece*, and *Annibal* remained unactive and motionleſs in *Italy*.

But upon moſt Occaſions, *Livy*'s Deſcriptions are remarkably ſhort; and ſuch as a Writer, who has no Regard but to Truth, would naturally give.

You'll have an Inſurrection of Barbarians, a Battle enſuing, and a Defeat, all in five Lines; which in *Tacitus* would have taken up as many Chapters[o].

A Commotion of Shepherds and Slaves is mentioned, and but juſt ſo; as repreſſed, not by Generals and Armies, but by legal Proſecutions, and the Authority of Magiſtrates and Laws[p].

[n] L. 29. 26. [o] L. 41. 10. [p] Vol. 5. p. 198. 212.

You

You have sometimes half a Dozen Towns taken in as many Lines, nay, in one Line [q]. The Historian's Pen keeps Pace with the Rapidity of the Conqueror's Sword. He dwells not upon Trifles; but, like a prudent General, reserves his Strength for Actions of Moment, and Cities of Eminence and Power.

You have an Earthquake in less than three Lines, yet described with all the Sublimity the Subject naturally dictates. The Introduction of this short Description is still more beautiful and sublime than the Description itself. He was relating the Battle of *Thrasimene*, and the brave Efforts of the *Roman* Soldiers upon their desperate Situation: *Tantusque fuit ardor, adeo intentus pugnæ animus, ut eum terræ motum (QUI MULTARUM URBIUM ITALIÆ MAGNAS PARTES PROSTRAVIT, AVERTITQUE CURSU RAPIDO AMNES, MARE FLUMINIBUS INVEXIT, MONTES LAPSU INGENTI PRORUIT) nemo pugnantium senserit* [r].

It is observable, that the Description here is in a Parenthesis, and brought in with a secon-

[q] Vol. V. p. 201. [r] Lib. 22. 5.

dary View. With the ſame Brevity he gives you a Tempeſt, a Fire, or Flood; and gives them as Things that fall in his Way, which he cannot avoid taking Notice of; and not like One, who ſeeks, or ſhews an Eagerneſs to catch at ſuch Opportunities of diſplaying his Eloquence and Talent at Deſcription[r].

In his Deſcription of any uncommon Appearance in Nature, where the Miraculous has been admitted by ignorant Antiquity, he is not careful or ſtudious to relate Abſurdities, and to heap Fable upon Fable; but, where he can, confutes them[s].

Livy has a wonderful Faculty of deſcribing not only Actions, but the different Paſſions that ariſe and correſpond to the different Situation of the Affair that is tranſacting and related. He ſeems to have known every natural Movement of the human Heart; with the fineſt Hand, he touches the different Springs of Pity, Joy, or Love. Though we are charmed with the Diction, yet the Paſſion

[r] vi. L. 30. 39.—— 31. 45.—— 33. 41.——35. 21.——35. 40.——38. 28. [s] See concerning the *Euripus*, L. 28. 6.

triumphs

triumphs over this airy Pleasure, and the Colourings of Art are quite shadowed by the affecting Strokes of Nature.

After the Battle of *Cannæ*, when *Annibal* advances to *Rome* with his Army, the Reader, struck with Anxiety and Concern, as if the Fate of his native Country was depending, and imagining himself a Citizen of old *Rome*, is attentive to every Measure, alarmed at every Motion, reads Terror and Dismay in every Face; sees Prætors, Consuls, Dictators, and the Senate all intent and busied in their several Charges; views *Annibal*, at the Head of the his *Numidians*, advancing before the Gates, the Armies drawn out in Order of Battle; —— and is all the while in the utmost Suspence for the momentous Event[u].

Again, we could scarce be more affected, were a foreign Army landed in *England*, than we are at *Asdrubal*'s having passed the *Alps*. The March of *Nero*; his joining his Brother Consul; *Asdrubal*'s Decampment; the Battle; the Intelligence received of it at *Rome*;—— render us all Eye, all Ear. The Historian engages our Heart, as well as our Senses.

[u] L. 26.

Every Paſſion that could affect a *Roman*, is ſo deſcribed as to affect the Reader.

As in the natural World, we have obſerved, *Livy* is not fond of the Miraculous in his Deſcription; ſo in the moral, he ſhocks you not with the Surprizing, the Extravagance of Paſſion, or ſudden Change of Temper and Conduct, upon Reaſons unaccountable, in the ſame Character. His Actions and Sentiments, I mean, thoſe of his Actors or hiſtorical Perſons, are exactly ſuited to their Characters. *Annibal* is the ſame from his firſt Appearance on the Stage of Action, till his laſt quitting of *Italy*; dreadful, even in his Retreat; and formidable, though flying; like a Lion chafed and robbed of his Prey; indignant, breathing Vengeance, ſtill formidable, and ſtill a Lion.

All is natural and uniform in our Hiſtorian; and you are prepared for the Event from the preparatory Steps to any Action; as you may frequently gueſs at the future Conduct of any Character, which he had before given.

The Defection of *Capua* to *Annibal* was the natural Effect of their Manners and Depravity. Liberty and good Faith were Words that had loſt their Credit and Eſteem at *Capua*. Licentiouſneſs and uninterrupted Indulgence were

were all they required: But theſe, it was imagined, could not be ſupported by their Adherence to a diſtreſſed and vanquiſhed People. But by calling in the Conqueror, they hoped to make their own Terms, and ſhare in the Spoils of Conqueſt. The reſt of their Conduct, to the Surrender of their City to the *Romans*, is uniform, and exactly anſwers the Character the Hiſtorian gave of them in the Beginning of the twenty-third Book. The laſt Speech of *Vibius Virius*, his Death with that of twenty-ſeven Senators, and the Manner of their Death, is the moſt in Character that can poſſibly be expreſſed[w].

[w] L. 26. 13, 14.

CHAP. III.

THE Purity of *Livy*'s Diction, and Elegance of his Compoſition, diſtinguiſh him as much from *Tacitus*, as the Juſtneſs of his Deſcription.

Whatever may be ſaid of the Purity of *Tacitus*'s Latin, 'tis beyond Diſpute, that he has ſeveral Expreſſions and Modes of Speech not frequently found in the Writers of the *Auguſtan* Age; ſeveral, I think, entirely unknown to them. 'Tis a true Character of his Style I have ſomewhere met with. *Stylus magis gravis quam elegans, aſper enim — duriuſculuſque atque a Latinæ linguæ Candore diſcedens.*

His Editors and Commentators were plainly ſenſible, that his *Latin* was not always the pureſt; and ſo have arbitarily in ſeveral Places corrected the Text: Subſtituting Words, and forming the Phraſe more agreeable to the Standard of Claſſical Elegance, and the Purity of former Ages.

I may add, that his Græciſms, and Poetic Liberties occur more frequently than in any of the *Roman* Hiſtorians. *Ne armentis quidam*

Juus

ſuus honor aut gloria frontis[x] —— wants little of the Meaſure, as it wants none of the Figures of heroic Poetry. For other Inſtances of this poetic Diction which abounds in *Tacitus*, the Reader is referr'd to the elegant and learned Critic *Strada*.[y]

Obſcurity is, I think, as chargeable upon *Tacitus*, as Want of Purity; and this latter is indeed frequently the Occaſion of the former. His Obſcurity is undeniable, from the different Opinions of Commentators upon the ſame Paſſage, where the Text is allow'd to be genuine, and from their Diſputes about the genuine Reading, when different Words, conveying different Senſes, are arbitarily obtruded and defended, as giving the true Senſe, which, it is plain, both Sides are often ignorant of.

'Tis pleaſant enough to obſerve the Conduct of the Hyper-Criticks upon theſe Occaſions. Several of the Annotators and Commentators upon *Tacitus* are allowed to be Scholars, and particularly eminent Maſters in claſſical Learning; yet you find them complaining —— *Locus obſcurus & corruptus:* —— *Turba-*

[x] De Morib. Germanor. [y] L. 2. Prob. 3. Hiſt.

runt

runt me verba: —*Locus eſt obſcuræ ſententiæ, imo incertæ:* —*Mentem loci non penetro:* —*Obſcura eſt ſententia*, &c.— Upon theſe Occaſions up ſtarts the Hyper-Critic, and tells you: *Non ſatis aſſequuntur vim ſententiæ VIRI ALIOQUIN DOCTISSIMI.* This Compliment is paid to theſe dim-ſighted Commentators, to diſplay our Hyper-Critic's greater Sagacity; who by a Note of a Dozen Lines, ſhews you the Perſpicuity and Beauty of the Paſſage in Queſtion.

Other Writers, 'tis true, are liable to the ſame Objections from the different Sentiments of Commentators upon the ſame Paſſage; but few, I think, if any of the *Roman* Hiſtorians, in the ſame Degree with *Tacitus*. Let a Reader take *Livy* in Hand without Tranſlation or Notes; if he is but a moderate Adept in the *Latin* Tongue, he will find little Difficulty in many Chapters together; except where ſome plodding Editor brings in an aukward Word to confound common Senſe, and ſpoil a beautiful Antitheſis. If he is a Proficient in the *Roman* Language, he will read a Book from End to End, with little Heſitation or Doubt concerning his Meaning in any Place: But a good Claſſical Scholar, who ſits down to *Tacitus*, diſdaining

ing the Aſſiſtance of Commentary or Tranſlator, will meet with Difficulties in every Book, and frequently in every Page.

What has render'd *Tacitus* obſcure, beſides the Want of Purity in his Style, is the Refinement of his Sentiments; which, like ſome Minims in Nature, require uncommon Sagacity and artificial Powers to aſſiſt you in the Knowledge of.

His Ignorance in ſome Caſes, as in the Battles, Marches, Conduct of his Generals, as well as Armies, which he would deſcribe, has, I think, greatly embarraſs'd his Story.

There are beſides, ſo many Particulars of Men and Things in carrying on, or the Relation of a general Action; for Inſtance, the War between *Vitellius* and *Veſpaſian*, as much obſcure the Narration. You loſe Sight of the general Plan by the numberleſs Particulars, often of a private Nature, that are thrown in the Way, and darken and confuſe the Subject.

At the ſame Time it muſt be acknowledg'd, that as his Sentiments are ſometimes very beautiful, ſo they are moſt happily expreſſed. But theſe are ſingle Sentences; often confined to the Extent

Extent of a Line ; have the Nature of a Proverb, and ſometimes of an Epigram ; where the Wit conſiſts in the Conciſeneſs, and often in the placing of a Word.

Livy's Compoſition is much of a different Caſt ; to deſcribe it requires his own happy Pen and exalted Genius. It is not eaſy to alter the Situation of a Word in his longeſt Periods, without loſing ſomething ſignificant in the Senſe, or muſical in the Sound. You have ſometimes a Sentence of ten or eleven Lines, yet quite clear; every Word expreſſive, and giving new Strength and added Ornament.

I know no Writer ſo happy in the Diſpoſition of his Words, and the Cadence of his Periods ; the longeſt of which are the beſt ; as they lengthen, they improve ; the more Sound, the more Senſe ; which roll united along, fixing your Attention, ſuſpending your Thought, entertaining the Fancy, till, with the Period clos'd in the fulleſt Manner, the Ear ſeems charm'd, and the Soul reſts ſatisfied.

Livy's Style in this Reſpect, I ſhould compare to the Courſe of ſome famed River ; which, (always clear, generally full, and rather ſtately and calm than rapid and ſwelling) after watering extenſive Plains, dividing fruitful Vallies,

lies, and viſiting populous Cities: The Parent of Plenty, the Channel of Commerce, a Kingdom's Wealth and Ornament; gathering Strength as it flows, and ſwell'd with the Streams of tributary Provinces, at length in full Majeſty mixes with the Ocean.

His Language is every where proportion'd to his Sentiments, and riſes or falls with his Subject; and he is not more natural and tender in the Deſcription of captive Beauty and female Diſtreſs, than great and lofty, when at the Head of adverſe Legions; and like a Miniſter of Providence hovering over the Field of Battle, he weighs the Fate of Nations, and decides the Empire of the World. [z]

Good Senſe, expreſs'd and applied with Propriety, will recommend any Writer, (as it does the Speaker) which, with a Love of Virtue and Liberty, renders him ſtill more reſpectable: But our Hiſtorian triumphs over every Writer not inſpired, that I have yet been acquainted with in all theſe Reſpects, and in every Qualification of an Author. Never Words were more juſtly choſen, or happily ſituated and apply'd to convey the Senſe; never was Senſe

[z] L. 30, 28, &c.

more

more happily apply'd to a Subject; you cannot conceive he could ſay more; you could not wiſh he would have ſaid leſs: Nothing can exceed his Language, but the Senſe conveyed in it; nothing can equal the Senſe, but the Propriety of the Application to Perſons and Things. His Language has beſides a peculiar Sublimity, ariſing from grander Ideas, or a more exalted Love of Virtue and Liberty, beyond any human Compoſition I know of; yet temper'd with ſo much Sweetneſs, that you know not whether to love or admire, whether he raiſes or charms you moſt.

In other Writers you meet with ſcatter'd Beauties, Strains of Eloquence, and elevated Expreſſions, diſpens'd more ſparingly in different Parts: In *Livy*, you have a conſtant Flow of manly Expreſſion and graceful Dignity; Eloquence as abundant, tho' as natural, as the plainer Proſe of other Writers.

If there is a Fault in the Compoſition of *Livy* (that we may not, by flattering his Faults, call his very Virtues in Queſtion) it ariſes from this Beauty here celebrated, the Length of his Periods, all diſpos'd with the utmoſt Elegance; the Arrangement of the Words being

as

as beautiful as can be imagin'd; and the Diction, tho' ſeemingly natural, being finiſh'd with the higheſt Strokes of Art; and too poliſh'd and elegant (the Poliſh and Elegance being too much of the ſame beautiful Caſt, the ſame flowing Cadence and happy Contraſt) for all his Speakers.

Yet here perhaps, ſome would think it a ſufficient Apology (as Beauties need an Apology) for our eloquent Author, that he does but follow the Practice of moſt, or all prophane Hiſtorians; who generally put the Sentiments of others into more modern and elegant Language than that of the Times, which are the Subject of the Story; eſpecially, if thoſe Times are remov'd any conſiderable Diſtance from the Age of the Writer; as the Speeches of our Anceſtors, they would tell you, ſo late as the *Baron*'s Wars, would not be very entertaining, handed down Word for Word in a modern Hiſtory of *England*.

The Character of *Livy*'s Compoſition upon the Whole, is a natural Sublimity (natural I call it; for tho' Nature is embelliſh'd with Art, yet is the Art wonderfully conceal'd by Nature, or perhaps the Product of it; and what

is Art in others, might be in him Nature) — a Sublimity temper'd with a moſt redundant Sweetneſs. He is ſtrong and maſculine, like eternal Truth, tender and engaging as Infant Innocence: With the Softneſs of the Lute, he mixes the Loftineſs of the Trumpet: with the Grandeur of the Epic, the Tenderneſs of Elegy: Heroic Magnanimity with Female Sweetneſs: Laconic Energy with Attic Elegance; the Colourings of Oratory with the Solidity of Reaſon; the Graces of Rhetoric with Philoſophic Accuracy; — is great without Extravagance; and humble without Meanneſs; familiar as a Friend, with the Majeſty of a Prince.

You have indeed ſometimes a homely Compariſon in *Livy*; but this is not the Hiſtorian's; but is ſuppos'd to proceed from the Humour, odd Wit, antient Manners, or plain and unpoliſhed Honeſty of the Speaker.

And ſometimes you have a ſwelling Expreſſion, a Grandeur a little affected, and bordering upon the Hyberbole: But neither

neither is this the Hiſtorians Language, or the Dialect of mere *Romans*; but comes from ſome *Greek*, *Sicilian*, or *Aſiatick*.

CHAP. IV.

BUT what ſtill recommends our Hiſtorian above his Compoſition, is his Moral Character; his Candour, Love of Liberty and his Country; his Honeſty and Virtue.

The Characters in *Livy* are generally good, except thoſe of Kings, who are generally Tyrants; and who are painted by our warm Republican under this peculiar Character, as if Tyranny was the worſt of Crimes. Such are *Nabis*, *Philip*, *Antiochus*, *Hieronimus*, and *Pyrrhus*.

Beſides theſe, there are not many Characters in *Livy*, which are repreſented with any Strokes of Severity, except the infamous Tax-gatherers and Publicans; juſt Objects of Reſentment, and which moved even the meek, the benevolent, and ever-bleſſed *Jeſus*. The other bad Characters in the Hiſtorian, are generally repreſented rather under the Influence of ſome head-ſtrong Paſſion, than wantonly wicked; and have often a Mixture of Virtue, or have performed ſomething worthy

thy of our former Notice; ſo that you are rather apt to pity their ill Fortune, than condemn their ill Conduct.

The Fall of *Capua* is a melancholy Story; is told without Bitterneſs and Rancour, and muſt move Pity even in a *Roman* Breaſt; though this People had proved the moſt perfidious Friends the *Romans* ever had, and were ſo depraved in their Manners, as to make their Fall ſeem not Suffering, but Deſert.

How different is the Conduct of *Tacitus* upon the Deſtruction of *Artaxata!* the Citizens of which voluntarily opened their Gates to the *Roman* Army, and had been guilty of no Treachery to deſerted Allies, nor ſo much as committed one Act of Hoſtility againſt their declared Enemies: Yet the City muſt be laid in Aſhes; which our Annaliſt would in Part excuſe, from the Profit and Glory accruing from ſuch a Deed: And to comfort the miſerable Inhabitants, a Miracle is exhibited, expreſſive of the Vengeance of the angry Gods, conſigning the City to utter Deſtruction[a].

[a] Ann. 13. 40.

The Speech of *Vibius Virius*, as was before obſerved, is quite in Character, and in the Style of an Epicurean [b]. Yet we cannot help lamenting his Fate, and the Fate of his Fellow-Sufferers, notwithſtanding their Treachery and abandoned Morals: There are ſome Strokes of Tenderneſs in this Speech, and in the ſad Cataſtrophe of this once ſuperb City, that makes every Man bleed who has a Country to loſe, and ſees ſo many Senators flying to Death, rather than ſurvive its Fate, and behold its miſerable Fall.

True Virtue is ſurely the moſt eaſy and happy Habit. The truly virtuous Man cannot do a diſagreeable Thing: As a Magiſtrate he cannot condemn a Malefactor but in ſuch a Manner as ſhews he pities him, and muſt make the Sufferer approve his Conduct in the very Act of Condemnation: The very blackeſt Villain receives Advantage from the Colours the virtuous Man draws him in; who has, like the Touch of *Midas*, an aſſimulating Quality; ſo that even Vice, paſſing through his Hands, catches ſome borrowed Luſtre, that

[b] Liv. L. 26. 10.

makes

makes us rather lament the Crime than deteſt the Criminal.

But moſt of *Livy*'s Characters are virtuous; and he ſeems to delight in Panegyrick [c], as much as *Tacitus* does in Scandal. The Hiſtorian is like his *Tempanius*, *non ſuis vanus laudibus, non crimine alieno lætus* [d]. He would willingly conceal any Thing that ſeems to reflect on another's Fame, except it be where the Reflection turns out to the future Honour of the Perſon accuſed [e]. If he does in ſome Places admit popular Scandal, 'tis only to expoſe the Injuſtice of it, and give a brighter Splendor to the ſhaded Character. He is willing, where there is Room for a double Conſtruction, to believe the beſt; and wiſhes it were otherwiſe, where he is obliged to confeſs the worſt [f]. He admits no doubtful Point, but goes upon the concurring Teſtimony of former Writers, where any Thing is advanced that may leſſen another's Fame [g].

Where Cenſures are paſſed upon the Conduct of Generals, he is ſo far from aggrava-

[c] See his Character of *Licinius*. L. 30. 1. [d] L. 4. 41.
[e] L. 27. 10. [f] L. 8. 18. [g] L. 9. 18.

ting them by his own Suspicions and Conjectures, that he turns Patron for the Injured; and is careful, where he can, to refute such Censures, by shewing the Impracticableness or Danger of pursuing any other Measures than those objected to [h].

In the Speech of *L. Æmilius* are finely exposed the common and popular Arts of Faction at Home, in discrediting and censuring the Conduct of Armies and Generals Abroad [i].

In the Reflection on *Manutius*'s Conduct, who slanderously accused the Dictator, by ascribing to him the Vices most resembling and nearest to his Virtues, *Livy* shews himself a most candid Writer [k].

He esteems it the worst of Arts to raise a Name on the Ruin of another Man's; and

[h] L. 31. c. 38. [i] L. 44. 22.

[k] [*Magister Equitum*] *ferox rapiduſque in consiliis, ac linquâ immodicus: Primo inter paucos, dein propalam in vulgus pro cunctatore segnem, & cauto timidum, affingens vicina Virtutibus vitia, compellabat; premendorumque superiorum arte (QUÆ PESSIMA ARS NIMIS PROSPERIS MULTORUM SUCCESSIBUS CREVIT) sese extollebat.* L. 22. 12.

with

with his uſual good Senſe tells you, that to blacken another's Character, does but blacken your own [l]. He ſpeaks with Pleaſure of thoſe happy Times, when Men lived without detracting from each other's Fame [m]. Envy, he deſcribes as a Paſſion ariſing from the Conſciouſneſs of meaner Abilities; as blind and ignorant of every Thing but how to carp at other Men's Virtues, and tarniſh the Honours and Rewards of ſuperior Merit [n]. He gives a Foe his Due, and frequently does Juſtice to the Enemies of the *Roman* State; approves their Conduct, applauds their Councils, and vindicates their Rights and Honour [o].

If

[l] L. 29. 37. [m] L. 2. 40. [n] L. 38. 49.

[o] The learned Compilers of the *Univerſal Hiſtory*, and others before them, have accuſed *Livy* of Partiality and Injuſtice in the Character he gives of *Annibal*. To omit ſeveral other Paſſages in *Livy* in Defence of this General, the fine Encomium he has given him in the 28th Book, c. 12. is, I ſuppoſe, equal at leaſt to any Thing that has been ſaid in his Favour by any other Writer; and he relates his Death after ſuch a Manner as throws a Reflection upon the *Roman* People, L. 39. 51. As to the Perfidy and Cruelty he ſtands charged with, they were of common Belief at *Rome*, and no doubt ſupported by the

If there is a Sneer in *Livy*, or a little Mixture of Satyr, it is generally ſuppoſed to proceed from the ill Nature, ill Manners, vain Confidence, or raſh Judgment of the Speaker.

Where Irony is admitted, it is great and ſublime; not unbecoming the Severity of a *Cato*, or the Dignity of a *Roman* Conſul [p].

Where Scurrility is ſuppoſed to have paſſed, he thinks it below him to relate it [q]. Or, where he takes Notice of perſonal Altercations,

Teſtimony of Antiquity. The *perfidus Annibal, dirum Annibalem abominatus parentibus Annibal* — of *Horace* ſpeak as much. His firſt Deſcent upon *Italy* and ſucceſſive Victories could leave no lovely Idea of him in the Minds of the *Romans*, nor prejudice their Writers in his Favour. The *Gauls* for ſome Ages were eſteemed no leſs cruel; which might in part be owing to the Impreſſions left of them in the Minds of the People from the firſt Sack of *Rome*. Thus cruel too were the *Romans* eſteemed in *Africk* after *Scipio*'s Conqueſts there. We can have no great Opinion of thoſe we ſuffer by, and are apt to transfer our own Fears or Weakneſs to the Cruelty of our Enemies. It was no difficult Matter in Queen *Elizabeth*'s Time for the Jeſuits in *Spain* to perſuade that People, who painted Sir *F. Drake* half a Man and half a Devil, that the reſt of the *Engliſh* Nation were ugly and like Devils.

[p] See *Cato*'s Speech, L. 34. c. 2, 3. [q] L. 42. 54.

'tis

'tis to condemn them; as in the Quarrel between the two Cenſors, *Livius* and *Druſus*[r]. Beſides here the Public was concerned; a public Office in the State was diſgraced by the Conduct of thoſe who bore it. At other Times, if you chance to meet with a Difference or Diſpute between two Generals, 'tis not carried on with Sarcaſm, Sneer, and Malice; but Sobriety, Manhood, and Reaſon.

In the Reproof or Reproach, which upon ſome Occaſions is beautifully inſerted, and well becomes the free Spirit of the Speakers, there is good Senſe, Dignity, and manly Indignation; and ſometimes an Elegance and Sublimity almoſt inexpreſſible: As when *Decius Magius*, a *Capuan*, but in the *Roman* Intereſt, was dragged in Chains to *Annibal*'s Camp. "Ye have got, ſays he, O Campa-
" nians, the Liberty which ye ſought. In
" the Midſt of the Forum, in open Day,
" in the Sight of you all, to none of the
" Campanians ſecond in Virtue, Birth or
" Fortune, I am in Chains dragged to Execu-
" tion. What more cruel or bloody could
" ye expect was *Capua* taken and ſacked by

[r] L. 30. 37.

" an

" an Enemy? Go, meet *Annibal*, beautify " the Streets of your City, and consecrate the " Day of his Arrival, that you may behold " this Triumph over your Countryman and " Citizen [f]."

[f] L. 23. 10.

CHAP.

CHAP. V.

IT will not be expected by those who are only versed in the modern Systems of Politicks, that a Writer of so much Justice, Candour and Honesty, can be of any great Use or Service in this Respect in the present Times.

Indeed, the Practitioners in many of the Courts of *Europe*, if they could not blush, would, I imagine, laugh at some of our Author's antiquated Maxims. For Instance, "That no Reason can ever be assigned to "justify a wicked Action [t]," is a Truth eternal as the Foundations of Nature and clear as God's Existence; yet might be deemed in modern Practice no better than Enthusiasm and Folly.

We know not that *Livy* was either Senator or General, or in any eminent Office in the State; yet he shews in the Speeches and Conduct of his Generals, a consummate Knowledge of whatever relates to Peace or War. The natural Propensities of human Nature,

[t] L. 28. 28.

the

the genuine Paſſions, their Riſe, Operation, Conſequence, and proper Reſtraint in particular or general Bodies; the progreſſive Stages of public Manners; and the different Effects of Fortune, Age and Circumſtances on the human Mind; the Extent and Uſe of Government; the true Policy of States bordering on each other, or at a Diſtance — he knew, and deſcribes with equal Juſtice and Beauty; but the crooked Twinings of falſe Policy, artificial Manners, and the dark Intrigues of bad Ambition, as they were not much in Vogue during that Period of his Hiſtory, which is come down to us; ſo they ſeem alſo not ſuited to his Heart, or to his Pen.

Yet a great Stateſman and Politician he muſt be allowed, though of a different Form and Order from *Tacitus* and his Imitators, the modern Adepts in the Science. Tricking Craft, and the low Game of Sharpers, Corruption, and that infamous Application to all the ruling Paſſions of Mankind, which make ſo great a Part of *European* Policy, are ſcarce mentioned by him, or mentioned but to be condemned. Utility, publick Utility, as far as it is conſiſtent with Honeſty, and agreeable to the Law of Nature and Nations, is indeed explained

explained occaſionally; but with all the Dignity of a *Roman* Senator, the Accuracy of a Caſuiſt, and the Formality of a Judge.

There are few Things relating to Peace or War, few Meaſures neceſſary for the ſucceſsful carrying on of this, or the juſt and equitable Adminiſtration of that: —— Few Maxims relating to Government in general, or the different Branches, Offices, Regulations, and Provinces in particular, which make up the Body-Politic, but what are caſually recommended, rationally explained, and properly introduced in the Councils or Conduct of ſome of our Hiſtorian's Characters. His Maxims are of general Utility, regarding no perſonal Intereſts or private Advantages, but as they are connected with the public Happineſs [u].

Our Author acknowledges no Policy, which has not Honeſty for its Foundation. When you have Craft and Falſehood, it is in ſome obnoxious Character, the wily *Carthaginian*, a crafty *Greek*, or falſe *Sicilian*.

[u] See *Machiavel*'s Diſcourſes on the firſt Decade of *Livy*, and *Strad.* L. 2. prolus. 4. Hiſtor.

Of

Of the ſame Order and Dignity in the Claſs of Hiſtorians are our Countrymen, *Raleigh* [w] and *Clarendon*. Whoever is acquainted with theſe Writers, will no more allow the low Crafts ſo much in Faſhion in modern Times to be genuine and juſt Policy, than he will allow a Quirk or a Quibble to be Law, a Sophiſm to be Truth, or a Pun, Wit.

Craft is a low Expedient to ſerve a Turn, or ſupply the Place of natural Meaſures; the Inſtrument of the weak or the wicked; but true Policy, which is always founded in Honeſty, is for ever the ſame. A Fineſſe or ſucceſsful Intrigue, like an Ambuſh in War, may anſwer for the Time, but can have no laſting Effect on the Fate or Fortune of a Kingdom. Power in honeſt Hands is above a Match for the moſt intriguing State in *Europe*. Power, founded in Virtue, is impregnable; Policy is frequently but an Art to conceal the Defect of real Strength, and is ſoon ſeen through; and to be convicted of a Cheat, does but the more incenſe the deluded Power againſt the Deluder. Cunning is but the low

[w] See his Preface to the Hiſtory of the World.

Mimic

Mimic of Wiſdom. The Diſtempers of a State may be ſalved up, or ſkinned over; but Diſtempers thus patched up, where the Effects are only regarded, and the Cauſe left in its Vigour, do but return with more Violence. Political Cunning is but Lying; and no great Good can accrue from Falſehood; But Integrity is not patching, but building; building deep and firm. Real Integrity is real Strength, which can ſtand a Storm, and is rather confirmed by Oppoſition. It may be endangered, but not over-powered: It may be ſhaken, but will not fall; or, if it falls, 'tis but to riſe with new Strength and added Luſtre.

Livy requires Sincerity in the Tranſactions of one State with another. That double Policy, which aims at pleaſing contrary Parties, without Affection to either, which has in View nothing but Self-Preſervation and private Advantage, without Regard to Truth, Alliances, public Liberty, or general Happineſs, he more than once condemns. Temporizing, he tells you, is not the Way, either to defeat Enemies, or to confirm your Friends[x].

[x] L. 32. 21.

So

So honeſt a Writer, it cannot be imagined, will be any more a Friend to Faction than Corruption. An open Enemy to both; he equally expoſes the ſeditious Humour of the Tribunes of the People, who, under Pretence of redreſſing Grievances, wanted often nothing more than Power and Place; and the Arts of the Senate, who, when hard puſhed by the Tribunes of the People, would cajole ſome factious Leader to deſert his Party, and put a Negative to ſome reaſonable Complaint of his Fellow-Tribunes and Fellow-Citizens.

All the Arts of Party, the Falſehoods framed, and bold Scandals ſpread to traduce Men in Place, and diſtinguiſh and raiſe Men out of Place, he equally ſaw and deteſted.

What Indignation againſt Envy and *Tribunitian* Faction muſt it raiſe in every honeſt Heart, to ſee them ſo villainouſly and ungratefully employed againſt the two *Scipio*'s? — Generals, who had frequently hazarded their Lives in Defence of their Country, and extended the *Roman* Name and Arms, by the Reduction of *Aſia* and *Afric*, beyond what all the Generals of the Common wealth had done ſince the Foundation of their City, muſt be arraigned as the worſt of Criminals, pillaged

pillaged while alive, and defamed when dead.

Sometimes private Reſentment, as well as Ambition, is repreſented by our Hiſtorian, as at the Bottom of public Clamour; equally maſking itſelf under public Pretences, and puſhing its Deſigns even to the Deſtruction of the State, which it affects to ſave.

Can there be a juſter Truth than this, or a greater Inſtance of our Author's good Senſe and Impartiality? "That where Party rules, "the Republic is often left deſolate, the "Good of the Whole being over-looked by a "more partial Attention to two different Ex-"tremes[y]." This is in Part beautifully exemplified by the Condition in which *Greece* is repreſented, during the *Roman* War. "The "principal Men in the *Grecian* States, ſays "the Hiſtorian, were divided into three Par-"ties; two of which, either by abjectly flat-"tering the *Roman* Republic, or courting the "Alliance of *Perſes*, promoted their own "private Intereſt at the Expence of the Pub-"lic; the third indeed oppoſed both theſe

[y] L. 5. 8.

" Factions, and vigorouſly endeavoured to " preſerve the Laws and Liberties of their " Country[z]." But we may eaſily imagine how feeble and unavailing the Efforts muſt be of a few honeſt Men in a divided and corrupted State.

The Unhappineſs of civil Diſſentions the Hiſtorian had Reaſon enough to lament, from a Peruſal of the bloody Annals of his own Country; and, as if he foreſaw, and would guard his Fellow-Citizens, and Ages to come, againſt future Calamities of the ſame Kind, obſerves, " That Faction and the Rage of " Party have been, and will be more deſtruc- " tive to a State, than foreign Wars, Famine, " or Peſtilence, and the Worſt of public " Miſeries aſcribed to the Vengeance of " Heaven[a]."

What Pity is it that *England* cannot boaſt of an Hiſtorian of equal Impartiality at leaſt with this honeſt Heathen? But ſo it is: Our Writers derive the greateſt Share of their Merit from adjuſting, or endeavouring to adjuſt the Rights of Subject and Sovereign; from

[z] L. 45. 31. [a] L. 4. 9.

ſettling

ſettling the Ceremonial of the Conſtitution; and above all, from their Partiality. An Affection for a Cauſe has too much diſpoſed even the beſt of them to deſcribe Perſons more than Things, and to lay down Opinions for Truths. Our Compilers (for moſt of them are little better [b].) are generally fixed in their Principles before they begin their Work; and write on ſet Purpoſe to defend one Party, rather than expoſe the Extravagancies and

[b] The Lord *Clarendon* is particularly to be excepted from coming under this Character, who is indeed a great Original, and had eminent Abilities by Nature for a Work of Compoſition. He was too, by his Profeſſion, well verſed in the Elements of Law and the Juſtice of the Kingdom; had beſides a great Knowledge of the *Engliſh* Conſtitution, and of the Law of Nature and Nations; ſaw deep into the Foibles and Paſſions of human Nature, and knew Men as well as Books; bore a great Share in, and was a Witneſs to moſt of the Tranſactions he relates, and had the beſt Intelligence that could be had of ſuch Things as he took upon Truſt; had for Years, 'tis plain, his Subject and Deſign in View, the Advantage of which muſt be very great in any Scheme or Subject of Literature. The Execution is anſwerable; his Compoſition being the beſt that modern Times, or perhaps any Times ſince the *Auguſtan* Age, have to boaſt of.

Wickedneſs of both. Hence every Page of our Annals is defaced and tortured. No Meaſures are related, without an Inſinuation, Comment or tedious Diſſertation to ſhew upon what Principles they are founded; and *Whig* and *Tory* make their Appearance in our Hiſtory before the *Dane* or *Norman*. While the Manners that exalt or debaſe the Spirit of a Nation, the Virtues that have dared to confront bold Tyranny, and ſtem the Torrent of Corruption, which have made *Britains* happy at Home, and terrible Abroad, have been little regarded or reflected on. Vice and Virtue are indeed much out of the Queſtion in the Cenſures paſſed upon, or the Encomiums given of the Hiſtorian's Actors. Party, like Charity, hides a Multitude of Sins; but no Diſtinction of Parts, or Pre-eminence of Wiſdom, can gain our Approbation to the Conduct of him who oppoſes our Prejudice and Paſſions. Civil and poſitive Opinions are made the Teſt of Men's Characters, as much as the Practice of diſtinguiſhed Moral Virtues, or the Defence of public Liberty and national Happineſs were of old. Hence the worthieſt Characters are defaced, and the brighteſt Actions ſhaded; for the Merit and Value

Value of all Actions and Characters are meaſured by their Conformity to the Author's Principles, and weigh'd in the partial Scales of theſe narrow-ſpirited Bigots.

How miſerable is it to obſerve (if I may be indulg'd in a Moment's Digreſſion) the unhappy Effect, which this Party-Spirit has, upon our Conduct in Life, as well as our Hiſtory; upon our Morals as well as our Writings; and the Miſchief done by it, both to private Characters and the public Weal; — tho' the Review is, I confeſs, painful. Every honeſt Man does, in ſome Degree, in his Character or Fortune ſuffer by it. *Walſingham*'s and *Clarendon*'s Integrity, *Somers*'s Capacity, and *Tillotſon*'s Piety and Learning, have been no Defence againſt Party-Prejudice, and the Malice of Faction. But this is little; the Cenſure of Knaves and Fools is real Applauſe: Scandal from ſome Hands is Encomium, which none but honeſt Men can deſerve: And when Calumny has done its worſt, a good Man preſerves the Integrity of his Heart, which is Liberty and Peace at Home. But the Miſchief done the Public is of ſtill more fatal Conſequence: Truth and Juſtice, our religious and civil Rights, are in their Turn both ſacrificed

to the Rage and Folly of Party. The Vigour that ſhould be exerted in promoting the public Happineſs, is employed in ſupporting a Faction. In the Church, we muſt with Pity have obſerved greater Heat in Defence of Points not eſſential, than for the Fundamentals of Chriſtianity; greater Malice againſt *Arminius* and *Calvin*, than againſt *Collins* or *Hobbs*, and greater Reverence for *Sacheverell* and *Baſtwick*, than for *Paul* or *Jeſus*. And (with Pity and Indignation we muſt ſpeak it) we ſee Men ſtill taking more Pains for their Party, than for their Salvation. In the State, ſhould the Time ever come when the public Treaſure muſt be employed to counter-work a Faction; and public Offices provided to ſatisfy Men, and not Men to diſcharge the Office: —— Should a Vote be the only Title to Preeminence and a Step to Honour: —— Should parliamentary Intereſt be Courage, Learning, Genius, Experience, Integrity and Piety, or ſupply the Want of all: —— Should Folly and Faction perſevere to make the Trade of Corruption almoſt neceſſary; ſo that we ſhould not know, which moſt to accuſe, the Corrupters and the Corrupted, or the Oppoſition and the Oppoſers, or to whom to give

moſt

moſt Credit, to them that had, or them that wanted a Place.—— What Proſtitution would be hereby made of public Honour, and what irreparable Injury done to the Morals as well as the Intereſt of the Nation?

If *Livy* is partial, 'tis what I can eaſily forgive him: A Partiality he has —— for Liberty and his Country.

So honeſt is his Heart, ſo tender his Love for his political Parent, and ſo powerful his Deſcription, that the Reader cannot confine his Joy or Sorrow, for any diſaſtrous or happy Accident that befalls the Republic. The Hiſtorian ſeems tranſported upon every Review of the Actions and Bravery of the old *Romans*: And *Rome*, by a Miſtake in Chronology, (which I can eaſily forgive him) is ſuppos'd Miſtreſs of the World, when her Extent of Empire was but inconſiderable[c]. His Country is ſtill uppermoſt in his Thoughts. Her Senate, her Religion, her Laws; nay, her Hills, her Plains, her *Tyber*, the very *Roman* Sky is the Object of his Love. We catch his Spirit and Flame as we read: We almoſt for-

[c] L. 21. c. 30.

get *Old England*, and imagine or wiſh ourſelves Citizens and Soldiers of *Old Rome*.

Tranſported with the Proſpect of her riſing Grandeur and extended Empire, he ſometimes ſeems impatient in the firſt Periods of his Hiſtory to launch out into brighter Scenes; yet dwells with Pleaſure on the diſtinguiſh'd Virtues of her firſt Patriots and Citizens; and ſeems charm'd with the diſintereſted Integrity of her Senators, the illuſtrious Poverty of her Dictator, the unconquerable Courage of her Troops, and the Humanity and Equity of her victorious Generals.

As a Review of the antient Manners, Virtues, Religion, Liberties, and Laws of this all-conquering City, thus honeſtly tranſports him; ſo the Proſpect of its declining Glory ſeems as deeply to affect him. He is frequently melancholy upon the State of Morals in his own Time, ſo oppoſite to the Manners of the antient Republic; and reflects (tho' never was Hiſtorian more candid and good-natur'd) on the growing Riches, Avarice and Luxury, Admiration of the *Grecian* Arts, unwieldy Greatneſs of Empire, civil Diſtractions, Contempt of Parents, Contempt of Religion, and encroaching

croaching Tyranny, that appeared in his Days [d]. The Tyrant *Cæſar* ſeems peculiarly mark'd out.

He ſhews himſelf indeed an undiſguis'd and avowed Enemy to Tyranny and Tyrants: Nor is there that political Theoriſt, antient or modern, that inſpires the ſame Love of public Liberty.

" To die for one's Country: — To die " with Glory, rather than to live with In- " famy: — A Death of Honour, rather than " a Life of Slavery;" — are Expreſſions that ſeem Muſic to his Ear, and give Tranſport to his Heart.

In what ſtrong Colours is Tyranny painted, in the Character and Conduct of the young *Hieronymus? Conſpexere purpuram ac diadema ac ſatellites armatos. — Hunc tam ſuperbum apparatum habitumque, convenientes ſequebantur mores, contemptus omnium hominum, ſuperbæ aures, contumelioſa dicta: rari aditus non alienis modo, ſed tutoribus etiam; libidines novæ, inhumana crudelitas* [e].

[d] Vol. II. p. 83, 88, 103, 104, 120, 184, 186, 193, 199—& L. 25. 40—26. 22. &c. [e] L. 24. 5.

In

In *Philip*'s Conduct, I think, the Hiſtorian had an Eye to the Dictator *Cæſar*: At leaſt a Reader of *Livy* cannot well peruſe the Character of the one, without reflecting upon that of the other. *Philip* was extremely laſcivious; ſo was *Cæſar*[f]: *Philip* debauch'd the Wives of Princes and Nobles; and it was dangerous, ſays our Hiſtorian, by an unſeaſonable Severity, to balk the King's Luſt. Does not *Suetonius* ſay the ſame of *Cæſar*? It was at the *Nemean* Games that *Philip* laid aſide the Enſigns of Royalty, and affected Popularity, by levelling himſelf with the People. It was at the *Lupercal* Games that *Cæſar* refus'd the Crown offer'd him by *Anthony*[g]. Both were abſolute, complaiſant Tyrants.

In the ſame Manner I cannot help thinking, but that *Theodotus* and *Soſis*, the Aſſaſſins of *Hieronymus*, are made to reſemble *Brutus* and *Caſſius*; — that *Anthony* ſeems plainly pointed at under the Character of *Andranadorus*: As the Death of *Cæſar* is ſhadow'd forth under that of *Hieronymus*[h].

[f] *Sueton. Jul.* c. 50. [g] *Sueton. Jul.* c. 79.
[h] *Liv.* L. 24.

The

The learned Reader will find the Reſemblance ſtill greater, by a more particular Compariſon of the Hiſtory of *Syracuſe* in *Livy*, with that of *Cæſar*'s Times; and next to a Wonder it has appear'd to me, that the Hiſtorian durſt ſpeak ſo plain on ſo critical a Subject at this Time. But the Love of Liberty was his ruling Paſſion, which he could not, or would not diſguiſe, and is the Soul of his Hiſtory: He dwells with Rapture on the Subject, and, with the Slaves enfranchiz'd by *Gracchus*[i], ſeems to raiſe his Hands and Voice to Heaven, in Tranſport at the Remembrance of the ineſtimable Bleſſing. The Word has Muſic in the Sound. Liberty is almoſt every Virtue and every Bleſſing in one; is more than Wealth, or Fame, or Empire can give: As Tyranny, by his Manner of deſcribing it, or the tranſient Mention of it, ſhould ſeem to be a Term of the moſt juſt Abhorrence, as implying the greateſt Crimes and Miſery that Mortals can do or ſuffer. The Tyrant is a Spectre he ſtartles at the Mention of, and calls out, "To Arms, to the Defence of your Temples, your Gods and your Country." The Cauſe

[i] L. 24. 14, 16.

of

of Liberty conſecrates the Arms; a Tyrant being one of Nature's Monſters, a Prodigy not to be expiated but by his own Blood, the moſt grateful Offering to a God of Truth and Mercy.

Our honeſt Heathen knew no *Right Divine* in Man. He could not conceive that a Tyrant acted by a Commiſſion from Heaven, while he was deſtroying Religion, or could enjoin, by God's Authority, the Violation of his Laws: — That the ſame Perſon could be ſacred and ſacrilegious; uncontroulable and irreſiſtible; tho' daily bathing in the Blood of Thouſands:—To ſtop whoſe murdering Hands it would be impious, and to free the labouring World, entitle the Deliverer to Damnation in the next. Theſe high Prerogatives and ſacred Authority of a Tyrant he could not conceive; and conſequently claims ſome Grains of Allowance, if he pays not that Reſpect to his Character, which ſome unhappy Thinkers, I judge, have aſſerted as its Due. A Tyrant he deſcribes as a Flatterer's, a Minion's, or a Woman's Tool; eminent for his Pride, diſtinguiſh'd by his Pomp and his Crimes; Contempt of Goodneſs and the Gods, infamous Luſts, inhuman Cruelty, Envy, Rapine and Revenge; — vain-glorious with

with the Parade of Armies, marching at his Nod, as Reſentment or Ambition prompts; unaccuſtomed to Truth and impatient of it; the Deſtroyer of national Councils; licentious at the Expence of equal Laws and common Liberty; capricious and vain; wanton in his Cruelty, and cruel in his Luſt; deſtroying the Order of the Civil, and the Happineſs of the Moral World [k].

More might be ſaid upon this Subject in an Age and Nation, where *Roman* Literature was more in Faſhion; where *Roman* Liberty was not deem'd Romantic, and *Roman* Virtue not ridiculous.

But to the Honour of our Author it muſt be obſerv'd, that theſe Sentiments of Liberty with his other Reflections, political or moral, are not officiouſly diſplay'd, or coldly recommended by naked Precept. *Livy*'s Wiſdom is convey'd in a more agreeable Manner. Truths are taught and explain'd by Actions. You have not the Theory and dead Letter, but the Practice of a juſt or bad Policy, and the Nature of Virtues, Vices, and Paſſions, in living and

[k] *Livy* paſſim.

real

real Characters, and exemplify'd by Historic Facts; by which the Historian departs not from his proper Character, nor assumes the Air and Style of a Pedagogue. Instruction is given in the Conduct of his Generals, — in the Relation, Circumstances and Event of any Action, or in the Arguments which are introduc'd to support a Matter in Question; — in Speeches not obtruded upon the Reader, and Debates not impertinent; so that the Form and Laws of History are not violated; the Moral or Reflection being as much a Part of it, as the Relation of any Fact or Accident.

Our judicious Historian rarely reflects or moralizes in his own Person. Where you have Maxims of Prudence, or Observations in Morals, they come from others, and from such who may be supposed capable of making them. Thus *multa quæ impedita natura sunt, concilio expediuntur* [1] —— is the Advice given by *Annibal* to the *Tarentines* upon a very proper and singular Occasion, *viz.* The transporting Ships over Land to a distant Port. And who could be a more proper Person to give this Advice than *Annibal?* That *Annibal*, who had passed

[1] L. 25. 11.

the

the *Alps*, then deemed impaſſable, and cover'd with the Horrors of Winter, at the Head of thirty thouſand Men?

Thus the Speeches in *Livy*, which abound with the wiſeſt Maxims, and moſt exalted Morals are exactly ſuited to the Character of the Speaker and the Occaſion they are applied to.

How exactly, for Inſtance, is the Character of that honeſt, artleſs, plain Patriot, *Fabius Maximus*, preſerv'd in his Speeches? He flatters no Paſſion, applies no popular Arts; by the moſt powerful Reaſon he prevails; by Truth alone he conquers. His Maxims, almoſt like divine Inſpiration, enlighten and command you. By the moſt undiſguiſed Honeſty and plain Patriotiſm, he baffles all Oppoſition, removes all Objections, ſets at Nought the Efforts of Faction, and the Odium attending the Exerciſe of the moſt diſtinguiſh'd Office in the *Roman* State.

His Speech to *Æmilius Paulus* is one of the beſt Compoſitions in *Livy*, in the *Roman* Hiſtory, in all Antiquity. 'Tis a Leſſon of good Senſe, ſound Policy, and true Glory. You may read it again and again with new Delight and Improvement. The Speaker was himſelf the

the Example of what he taught. The Occaſion was the moſt proper and urgent. There is more Wiſdom (I mean of the didactic and dogmatic Kind) in this Speech, than in any beſides that I remember in *Livy*; yet is there not one Sentence, (tho' there are almoſt as many Maxims as Periods) but what has an exact Relation to the preſent Subject [m].

All *Fabius*'s Speeches are worthy a particular Attention. Beſides which, I would recommend thoſe of *Quintus Capitolinus* in the third Book, of *Camillus* in the fifth, of *Manlius Torquatus* againſt redeeming the Captives taken at *Cannæ*, in the twenty-ſecond; —— of *Scipio*'s to his Soldiers, upon the Sedition in *Spain*, in the twenty-eighth; —— of *Annibal*'s in the thirtieth; —— and of *Flaminius* at the general Diet of *Corinth*, before he left *Greece*, in the thirty-fourth. In theſe, and indeed in moſt of the Speeches recorded by our Hiſtorian, tho' Strength and Sweetneſs, Majeſty and Grace, Elegance of Diction, Juſtneſs of Senſe, and Beauty of Moral be conſpicuous; yet the Application of the Whole to the Subject in Debate, and the Character of

[m] L. 22. 39.

the

the Speaker, is ſo proper and natural, that you imagine you are but reading the Hiſtory of Fact, while you are engag'd in ſome of the fineſt Leſſons of civil Wiſdom and Moral Diſcipline, that are to be found in the Gentile World.

CHAP. VI.

THE Advantage and Beauty of Virtue our Hiſtorian deſcribes like one who felt it deep at Heart, who loved it as his Friend, Companion, and Delight; and recommends it as the Sovereign Happineſs of Mankind, and the beſt and only Title to divine Protection.

Virtue, I know not how, has of late been almoſt loſt in Men's Enquiries after it. Our Morality has degenerated into Debate and Controverſy, and our Divinity into mere Philoſophy. Or rather may we not ſay, that we have got a Philoſophy without a Morality, a Morality without a Religion, a Religion without a Divinity, and a Divinity without a God? We are grown fonder of Words than Things, and more eager to invent new Notions, than make a due Uſe and Improvement of the old. Pride and Pedantry have taken Place of moral Practice; and cold metaphyſic Heads (which were never intended by Nature for public Life, or the Reformation of public Manners) have ſupplanted warm and honeſt

honeſt Hearts: The modern Moraliſt rather tells you, what is the Eſſence of Virtue in ſcolaſtic Terms, and formal Definitions, than diſplays its Beauty in his Life and Language; he diſputes when he ſhould perſuade; diſtinguiſhes and refines when he ſhould recommend and enforce; and is more a Wrangler and a Caſuiſt, than an Orator and a Moraliſt.

That beſt Philoſophy, the active, is never to be learnt from ſuch Maſters. To form a juſt Example of Moral and Civil Virtues, I ſhould prefer our Author, and one other of the ſame happy Genius[n], to all the Moraliſts, antient and modern, put together. The Hiſtorian's Morality is not a ſhadowy Apparatus of Terms and Definitions, a lifeleſs Delineation of the Paſſions, Virtues, and Duties of human Nature; but a Draught in full Life, in hiſtoric Characters, and real Manners. You are charm'd with the Colours, and delighted as well as improv'd; not only edified, but animated: While your Head is inſtructed, your Heart is amended; you are taught not to diſpute, but practiſe; to live uprightly, to act not the ſelfiſh, or the ſordid; but the Manly, the

[n] *Xenophon.*

Public, the *Roman*, and (what was eſteem'd the Foundation and Crown of every Virtue) the religious Part.

Yet occaſionally, as Perſons or Things preſent themſelves, he diſtinguiſhes in the juſteſt Manner, (without the Formality of a Profeſſor, or the intemperate Vanity of a Pedant) between Cunning and Prudence, Boldneſs and Raſhneſs, Religion and Superſtition, Liberty and Licentiouſneſs, a Title and a Character, nominal Honour and real Honeſty. He ſhews, that a vain Confidence differs widely from a rational Hope; — that Caution is not Cowardice; nor a prudent Delay in Matters of Moment, a blameable Backwardneſs.

But this is no more than any Writer of good common Senſe, might have ſaid as well as *Livy*; the Labour of the Head, not the Dictate of the Heart. The Morality moſt admirable in him, is that philoſophic Taſte, thoſe juſt Sentiments of true Glory, which in a Manner diſtinguiſh him from all the Writers of Antiquity.

True Merit he makes to conſiſt, not in Shew, Oſtentation, and popular Appearance, in the Pomp of a Triumph, or the Eclat of a Victory, but in the Contempt of vulgar Applauſe,

plauſe, Equanimity under unjuſt Cenſure, and an Inflexibility in what is right and juſt, tho' in Oppoſition to the Sentiments of the World beſide. A truly great Soul is equally firm againſt vain Glory and falſe Infamy. To avoid Fame, he makes a juſt Title to Fame; and the Reſignation of the firſt Office in the State for the public Good, a greater Glory than the full and glittering Exerciſe of it. In a Competition for Precedence in the Pomp of a Triumph, the Man who yields the foremoſt Place, (the Merit of the Competitors being ſuppos'd equal) gains the Prize of Glory by his Submiſſion: Real Merit needs no Trappings; a Conqueror is triumphant tho' on Foot; riſes by his Humility, and gains Glory by the Contempt of it. The Deference paid, and due Applauſe given to ſuperior Merit, even to the leſſening of the Character of him who gives the Applauſe, is a Modeſty more to be admired, than the Honour of the preferr'd Conqueror. Moderation and Humanity after a Victory is eſteemed more commendable than the Victory itſelf: As true Greatneſs of Mind is made to conſiſt in the Contempt of Wealth, and to deſpiſe, not to acquire a Crown, the true Glory. Pleaſures are the moſt dange-

rous Enemies to Truth and Virtue; and he that ſubdues his Paſſions is the moſt diſtinguiſh'd Conqueror.

Theſe are ſome of the Maxims of our Writer; not impertinently introduc'd, or officiouſly obtruded upon the Reader, but naturally ariſing from the moſt proper Occaſions; inſerted in the Speeches, and exemplified in the Actions of his principal Characters. 'Tis not a Virtue in Theory, but in Life and Practice, in Benevolence of Manners, Candour of Heart, and Integrity of Soul, that ſo powerfully charms us in this Writer.

What is call'd Virtue in ſome Characters, makes an aukward and ſhocking Appearance; is ſevere, harſh, and fordidding. The Patrons of Vice could wiſh no greater Advantage to their Cauſe, than a ſufficient Number of ſuch Advocates for Virtue: If they adviſe, 'tis with ill Manners; if they reflect, 'tis with ill Nature; if they reprove, 'tis with Inſolence: Pedants in Theory, and Inquiſitors in Practice! Men, who have learned Virtue by the Book, talk of it by Rule; having Heads ſtuff'd with Definitions and Diſtinctions, but never felt the all-conquering Charms of Virtue at the Heart! Moraliſts, whoſe Syſtem of Virtue is unconnected

nected with Goodneſs; whoſe Hands never open to relieve; whoſe Eye never drops a Tear of Humanity; whoſe Features ſpeak no Complacency of Heart, or Good-will to Mankind.

From obſerving the Manners of theſe Virtuoſo's, or from our philoſophical Diſputes, concerning the Nature and Eſſence of Virtue, Goodneſs in my Ear ſounds better than Virtue. Our Hiſtorian, as he makes Honeſty the Foundation of his Policy, ſo is Goodneſs the Crown of his Morality. *The beſt of Men* is with him not only the beſt, but the greateſt Character. No Victory is deem'd ſo conſpicuous as Superiority in a Competition for a Title ſo glorious. No Offices, Honours, or Triumphs decreed by People or Senate, can equal the Honour of ſo diſtinguiſhed a Merit [o].

Thus does our Hiſtorian moralize, but ſtill by Example, more than Precept; which renders Virtue more lovely, as being practicable; at the ſame Time that it gives us an high Opinion of the Dignity of human Nature,

[o] L. 29, 14. — 30, 40.

when we see Mortality not incapable of such exalted Degrees of Moral Perfection.

As *Tacitus* seems to have given us the very worst Side, and lowest Degeneracy of human Nature in the Picture of *Tiberius*, and his other Actors; so *Livy* has exhibited the fairest Draught of Moral Virtue, and human Manners in the Character and Conduct of his Heroes; particularly in the Example of *Scipio*. Not that I suppose this a fictitious Draught, made up, like the Life of *Pythagoras*, or *Appollonius Tyaneus*, by *Jamblicus* and *Philostratus*, of romantic Falshoods and a visionary Virtue. *Scipio*'s was a real Character: An imaginary Portrait would neither have affected the Reader nor the Writer so much as this plainly does. The Writer was in Love with it, and so must the Reader be, who has either Sense of Beauty, and Taste for Elegance of Manners, or a Breast susceptible of the Impressions of Humanity, or a Heart warm'd with the Love of public Liberty, or a Soul to be fired with the Memory of antient Heroism.

But 'tis not the Warrior we are here recommending and applauding in the Historian, or in the

the Hero; tho' there is a Novelty in his Conduct that charms us, and a Gallantry that we cannot but admire: What he projects, is almoſt inſtantly executed; if he commands, his Authority is irreſiſtable; when he appears [p], *Annibal* himſelf retires; if he fights, he conquers; ſtrong Cities are taken, Armies routed, Seditions quell'd, Kingdoms ſubdu'd, Fleets equipp'd, and Troops tranſported with a kind of divine *Fiat:* Nothing obſtructs the Succeſs of his Meaſures; and we can ſcarce diveſt ourſelves of the Opinion that ſome Divinity attends him. Upon his firſt Landing, *Africk* is in a Manner abandon'd; and *Carthage* under that Dread and Conſternation, as if their City had been taken by Storm: — Yet after all, 'tis the Principle of Goodneſs in this Character, which moſt powerfully charms us; particularly in the Treatment of *Allucio* and the Captive Maid, before referr'd to. And in what an amiable Light does the Hero here appear? Not more victorious by his Arms than by his Generoſity! His Heart overflows with Humanity. It ſhould ſeem, as if he thought it the trueſt Glory to do Good, and to ſhew Mercy. The Hiſtorian's as well as

[p] At *Locri.*

the

the Heroe's Heart, ſeems ſuſceptible of the tendereſt and moſt generous Impreſſions: —— To triumph in any Inſtance of Humanity more than in a Battle gain'd; in releaſing, rather than making Priſoners; as if Power was but another Name for Goodneſs. The Hero fights, as if it were but to ſave; and conquers, but to make the vanquiſh'd happy; to leave Monuments of his Mercy, rather than of his Valour behind him. The Hiſtorian has the peculiar Art of deſcribing that Flow of Joy, which ariſes from ſome diſtinguiſh'd Inſtance of Goodneſs communicated and receiv'd, as if himſelf had been (nay, the Reader, from the Deſcription, and the correſpondent Paſſions ariſing in his Breaſt, may imagine himſelf to be) both the Benefactor and the Perſon oblig'd. *Livy* every where gives to Benevolence and Goodneſs the higheſt Applauſe; as if by theſe Man exerted his beſt Powers, and the higheſt Excellence of his Nature, and the Gods their beſt Prerogatives; — as if in Goodneſs alone, Men could emulate the Gods, and the Gods themſelves had no other Title to Divinity.

It muſt be obſerved upon this Head, that *Livy* has to his Morality added Religion; as

ſenſible

ſenſible how feebly Man, Society, or human Nature, could be ſupported without it. He frequently expreſſes his Senſe of Providence, and the Inability of Man to bring about his own Devices without the Aſſiſtance of Heaven [q].

Criminals in our Hiſtorian are not treated only as civil Offenders, but as Violaters of the divine Laws, and obnoxious to the Vengeance of the Gods; particularly murdering Tyrants, the perjured and ſacrilegious.

Nay, what a Picture does he draw of a Whore, and in what different Colours from the *Poppæas* and *Sabinas* of *Tacitus!*—" A " Sorcereſs, whoſe poiſonous Charms extin- " guiſh in Youth all Senſe of Duty to Pa- " rents, and Regard for the Gods [r].

If upon Occaſion, and 'tis but rarely he has Occaſion, he recounts the Effects of Cruelty, Luſt, or Sacrilege, he paints ſo that you are ſtruck with Horror, as if yourſelf was the Sufferer by, or the Sacrifice made to the moſt curſed Paſſions. You are inſtructed to avoid the Crime, from the Horror of the Deed and the Puniſhment attending it. Providence

[q] L. 23. 22—29. 8, *&c.* [r] L. 38. 11.

is

is ſtill acquitted, and, in this Reſpect, you are eaſy.

Upon the moſt unpromiſing Appearances, and trying Occaſions, as in the Sufferings of helpleſs Innocence, *Livy* is not himſelf ſtaggered, nor ſtaggers his Reader with Doubts and Difficulties concerning the Ways of Heaven. The Doctrine of a juſt and righteous Adminiſtration in the moral World, is ſtill aſſerted and ſupported. Thus upon the unhappy Fate of *Poris* and *Theoxena* and their Children, who were forced to diſpatch themſelves to avoid *Philip*'s Cruelty: "The "Curſes of the People, ſays the Hiſtorian, "which fell upon *Philip* on this Occaſion, "being heard by all the Gods, made him turn "his Cruelty upon his own Blood [r]."

Tacitus, upon ſome bloody Executions, ordered, I think, by *Nero*, triumphs as it were upon the Occaſion, as it gives him an Handle to accuſe Providence and inſult Heaven [s].

With Regard to the Public, *Livy* ſaw and lamented the declining Cauſe of Religion, and is every where full of the unaffected Piety of the old *Romans*. Their religious Conduct,

[r] L. 40. 4, 5. [s] *Vid.* Ann. 14. 12—& 16. 33.

the

their Application to the Gods in every Exigency, and Expectation of Deliverance from national Calamities only by the Favour of Heaven, he ſeems to have diſplayed in the moſt ſtudied Manner, to expoſe, and, if poſſible, to amend the infidel Age, in which he lived.

Religion is made to conſiſt in Purity of Heart and Integrity of Manners, rather than the Pomp of a Sacrifice, or the Magnificence and Splendour of outward Ceremonies, and coſtly Oblations.

As to the Superſtition ſo commonly objected to *Livy* by every low Tranſlator of Baſtard Claſſics to ſet aſide the Merit of our Author, and recommend their own paultry Performances, the Objectors ſeem to be ignorant, that the Prodigies related are not related meerly as extraordinary Appearances, and to be wondered at for their contravening the Courſe of Nature; but as providential Interpoſitions, affecting the public Meaſures and Councils, and which frequently produced an Act of State and public Supplications. Conſidered in this Light, and in this Light they were conſidered by the old *Romans*, they were as neceſſary and proper to be recorded by the Hiſtorian, as Decrees

crees of the Senate or Battles fought; the one being frequently connected with the other [u]. Our Author was not that Slave to Superſtition he is generally repreſented; and upon ſeveral Occaſions, treats the Prodigies he relates as ſuperſtitious, and unworthy of Credit [w]. So ill-grounded and unjuſt is the Remark of the Fathers *Catrou* and *Rouille*, "That he ſwal-"lowed all the wonderful Stories that were "current among the People for real Mira-"cles [x]."

As to the ſuperſtitious Belief and Practice of old *Rome*, I think it is eaſily accounted for. They were religious yet ignorant; and whenever Ignorance and Religion unite, Superſtition is the natural Offspring.

The Ladies in the *Roman* Hiſtory, and I ſuppoſe in all Hiſtories till modern Times (when Huſbands and Fathers have thought it for their Intereſt to have their Wives and Daughters inſtructed in the Principles of the minute Philoſophy) have been more religious and (their Fears being greater, and their Knowledge leſs) more ſuperſtitious than the Men.

[u] Vol. III. p. 266. 284. [w] Vol. II. p. 35. Vol. III. p. 284. 338. Vol. IV. p. 22. [x] Preface to the *Roman* Hiſtory.

The

The Superſtition of the Vulgar in the *Romiſh* Church is in a great Meaſure owing to their Ignorance. And in Proportion as Ignorance and Zeal prevail in any of the foreign Churches; in the ſame Proportion, I preſume, we may find their Superſtition increaſing.

Nay, it has tainted their Hiſtory, as well as their Manners; and we need the leſs wonder at *Livy*, when we find a Popiſh Biſhop ſeeming at leaſt as credulous as our Pagan Hiſtorian. The Biſhop of *Rhodez* relating the Murder of *Henry the Great* by *Ravillac*, thus comments upon it: "Certainly Heaven "and Earth had given but too many Prog- "noſticks of what arrived. A very great "Eclipſe of the whole Body of the Sun in "1608; a terrible Comet which appeared "the Year proceeding: Earthquakes in ſeve- "ral Places. Monſters born in divers Coun- "tries of *France*. Rains of Blood, which "fell in ſeveral Places. A great Plague in "1606. Apparitions of Phantoms, and many "other Prodigies kept Men in Fear of ſome "terrible Event [y]."

[y] Hiſtory of *Henry* King of *France* and *Navarre*, p. 577.

As

As to the old *Romans*, notwithſtanding their Superſtition, a Reader, who can diſtinguiſh between the Uſe and Abuſe of any Thing, may reap conſiderable Advantage from obſerving their religious Practice.

In this Reſpect, *Livy* is peculiarly worthy the Peruſal of a modern Infidel.

This Man will tell us of the great Exploits of the antient *Romans*, and the Efforts of mere Reaſon and human Virtue in this People. And can he refrain from bluſhing, when he pretends Reaſon for trampling on the Religion of his Country; which theſe *unenlighten'd Romans* (as he calls them) thought the worſt of Crimes.

Again, an Infidel would find from our Hiſtorian, that the Eſtabliſhment of Religion was found neceſſary to the Security of civil Society: —— That the Happineſs or Miſery of a Nation, generally bore a Proportion to their Obſervance or Neglect of the Deity; or, in other Words, that the Rectitude of human Actions being beſt ſecured by the Awe of a ſupreme Being, to this religious Principle deſtroyed, muſt ſucceed Licentiouſneſs of Action and Depravity of Morals.

Again,

Again, our Infidel would find, that a Religion without Prieſts, Temples, and Ceremonies, was a Thing unknown to Antiquity; —— that Miracles were thought no Diſcredit, but a Confirmation of Religion; — that a Maintenance out of the public Revenue to thoſe who waited at the Altar, was not thought a Miſapplication of the public Treaſure; — that Ornament and Splendor were not deem'd unneceſſary in the Miniſters and Miniſtrations of the public Worſhip.

CHAP. VII.

FROM what has been ſaid of the Compoſition and Virtue of our Hiſtorian, his general Character may be, in ſome Meaſure underſtood, tho' not eaſily expreſs'd.

He was deeply ſenſible of the Uncertainty of human Greatneſs, and the ſuperior Excellency of Virtue, to every outward Accompliſhment and titular Honour; —— had a truly philoſophical Contempt of Riches and falſe Grandeur; —— eſteem'd Poverty itſelf a Virtue, Poverty and Virtue in the ſame Character as the Height of Virtue: —— was an Enemy to Luxury, as the Bane of civil Life; —— to Infidelity, as the Source of Immorality; and to Faction and civil Arms, as deſtructive of civil Liberty and Happineſs. With this comprehenſive View of public Manners and their Tendency, he had the juſteſt Sentiments of domeſtic Order, filial Duty, female Decency, and Submiſſion; with the moſt delicate Senſe of the tenderer Paſſions, parental Affection, and conjugal Love. He conveys not one looſe

looſe Idea, or unchaſte Sentiment, through his whole Work.

With the fulleſt Perſuaſion of the Neceſſity and Expediency of Honeſty, to carry on the Buſineſs of the Public, it will be leſs wonder'd at, that he requires Integrity in the Tranſactions of private Life; —— that an Enemy to Faction in the State, ſhould be no Friend to Party in a Neighbourhood; eſteeming it infamous to enter into, and ſupport other Men's Animoſities, or to uſe your Power to gratify other People's Paſſions, and revenge their Quarrels. He was ſurely a very honeſt Man; and has exemplify'd his own Definition thro' his whole Hiſtory; "approving and diſap-"proving according to his own Judgment, "and wearing a Conſcience not flexible and "pliable to the Nod and Direction of "others."

He was a Lover of Mankind; and if he was ever an Enemy, it was only to the Oppreſſive, the Envious and Detracting. His Heart ſeems to bleed for the Miſery he relates: He ſhares in the Sorrows, and triumphs in the Joys of his Fellow-Creatures; —— pities even the Offender he is obliged to expoſe; and

glories in other Men's Virtues, as if he was the better for them.

A Love of Virtue and of Liberty was indeed the ruling Paſſion of his Soul. Theſe diffus'd through his Writings, raiſe or improve the ſame Paſſions in his Readers; and are able (was any Mortal Charm ſufficient for the Taſk) to awaken the dying Embers of Liberty and Virtue even in a *Britiſh* Breaſt.

To inſpire, or revive the ſame honeſt Ardour in his Countrymen, was, I queſtion not, the Deſign of his Hiſtory. To this End, he has ſet the brighteſt Side of every Action, the Prudence of every Meaſure, the Splendor of every Virtue, and the worthy Part of every Character in the faireſt Light (for he was one of thoſe great Souls to whom Nothing in the Moral World was too difficult to comprehend or expreſs; —— no Actions ſo bright, which he could not illuminate; no Characters ſo high, which he could not adorn.) His Conſuls have Dignity; his Senate, Order, Wiſdom, and Majeſty; his Generals, Authority: —— His Characters are great, his Manners virtuous and chaſte: You have Diſcipline in the Army; Bravery

Bravery in Action; Sagacity in Council; Faith in Alliances; Integrity in the Administration of public Justice; Severity in the Punishment of public Enormities; Unanimity in Office; and Frugality in the public Expences.

His Subject was indeed great, and he has manag'd it accordingly; for never was Language more happily apply'd to a Subject, or more expressive of the various Passions, Actions, and Characters intended to be described. He is graceful and modest as Maiden Blushes, yet strong and masculine as *Roman* Vigour; beautiful as infant Innocence, yet elevated and grand as the Majesty of the *Roman* Empire; happy as heart-felt Ease and conscious Virtue; harmonious as Nature, and benevolent like its God.

In his whole Composition you have nothing misplaced or redundant: Every Word has its Emphasis; and every Period its Beauty. *Livy* is not chargeable (if we might say so of a mere Mortal) with one Impertinence in Thought, or Impropriety in Diction. He connects his Story with all the Art which the Painter employs in mixing his Lights and

Shades: He has indeed a fine Hand; — is correct, yet natural; natural, yet elegant; and majeſtic in his Simplicity; — exact without Minuteneſs; particular without being tedious; general where 'tis proper, without Confuſion; — plain, yet never low; ſweet, yet never ſatiates; — ſtrong, but not raſh; and great, without Extravagance. He has all the Clearneſs and Purity of *Cæſar*, with ſuperior Majeſty; — all the Beauty of *Curtius* without the Gaiety; all his Brightneſs, without his Glitter and Tinſel; — all the Vigour and Maſculine Moral of *Saluſt*, with a more candid Spirit, a finer Imagination, and a more flowing Eloquence. He ſeems indeed to have been born to charm, as others are to ſpeak; —— to add a Grace to Nature, a Dignity to Truth, and a Beauty to Virtue. His Thoughts are not only the propereſt, but the moſt happy, and elevated: His Expreſſions are anſwerable; and he conceives not more nobly than he ſpeaks. While his Reaſon captivates the Soul, his Harmony charms the Ear, and the Power of this double Enchanter is irreſiſtible. With a Beauty and Sweetneſs, which all the Delicacies of Senſe, and all the Regions of laviſh Nature cannot

equal,

equal, he has a Wiſdom to which old Age might liſten without Diſdain, and the wiſeſt Legiſlators improve by.

Whatever Wiſdom, Virtue, or Eloquence, is aſcribed to the Heroe or the Stateſman of old *Rome*, I think, our Hiſtorian was endowed with. None but ſuch a one could have ſo thoroughly entered into their Characters, expreſs'd their Sentiments, or deſcribed their Actions. I will not ſay that every Speech aſcribed to *Camillus*, *Fabius Maximus*, *Scipio*, *Annibal*, &c. are the real Expreſſions of thoſe Heroes: But I think it impoſſible to imagine Sentiments or Actions more proper, or more adapted to the Characters, which Antiquity has handed down of thoſe extraordinary Men. Nay, I muſt own, I think the Hiſtorian excells his Heroes; and has given them a Virtue, Wiſdom, and Eloquence, which none but himſelf was poſſeſs'd of in ſo eminent a Degree. That Prudence, conſummate as Mortality can attain to; that Wiſdom, more than Oracular, that Greatneſs and Firmneſs of Soul, ſuperior to every Paſſion or Appetite for Fame, equally unmov'd by vain Glory, and falſe Infamy, aſcribed to *Fabius Maximus*, were at leaſt as much the Hiſtorian's as the

Heroe's. That lovely Picture of antient Heroiſm, that bright Portrait of human Manners ſo beautifully diſpos'd in the Character of *Scipio*, had, I am perſuaded, an anſwerable Idea in the Writer's Soul.

His Hiſtory exhibits the juſteſt Pattern of Perfection in human Compoſition and Moral Virtue, that the Heathen World has to boaſt of (if we except the Life of *Socrates*, as writ by his two Diſciples, *Plato* and *Xenophon.*) His Language is Muſic to the Ear; his Virtue Rapture to the Soul. He paints ſo, that you could for ever gaze; he ſpeaks ſo, that you could for ever hear. His Narration tranſports you: His Liberty fires you; his Goodneſs charms you; his Love to his Country endears both it and him to your beſt Affections, as Men and Citizens. His Philoſophy is rational and manly; practicable tho' great, and tho' ſublime, yet ſober: —— Recommended by the moſt lovely Colours, in which every virtuous Soul beheld it, and exceeded by nothing but (where 'tis a Glory to be outdone) the Philoſophy of Heaven.

I wonder not that the Beauties of the firſt City in the World wanted Admirers, while he

he ſpake [z]. The Extent of the *Roman* Empire reflects not ſo much Glory upon this People as his Writings. The Conqueſts of their moſt diſtinguiſh'd Generals is low Merit, compared with his Virtues and Genius. Was every Monument of *Roman* Greatneſs deſtroy'd, more than this is preſerv'd in his Hiſtory: Was every Monument of their Greatneſs ſtill extant, it would be diſgrac'd by the Sublimity and Excellency of his Work.

[z] *Quanta fuit operis excellentia; ut per tantum maris & terrarum ſpacium, ad urbem orbis dominam & domitis nationibus imperantem, non urgente negotio, non ob ipſius videndæ deſiderium: in ætate preſertim Cæſaris Auguſti: SEDOB UNUM DUNTAXAT EJUS INCOLAM AUDIENDUM, concurſus illuſtrium fieret. Petrarch.* L. 2. *Tract.* 2. C. 5.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

AFTER what has been ſaid of our two Writers, it will not be difficult to form a Compariſon betwixt them.

Livy, ſuch was his good Fortune in a Subject, profeſſes to abſtain from Affairs foreign to the *Roman* State, having Work enough upon his Hands to relate what properly belonged to his Story. *Tacitus*, for Want of Matter at Home, ſuch was his Unhappineſs, makes frequent, and ſometimes tedious Excurſions into foreign Affairs and diſtant Kingdoms.

Where *Livy* chances to refer to, or quote Antiquity, it is not ſo much to expoſe, as to amend the Practice of his own Times, and the ill Morals and Impiety of the Age he lived in. When *Tacitus* does it, it is to ſhew his own Erudition, his Malice or ill Will, to Perſons often more than Things.

Livy's Hiſtory is plainly deſigned as a Leſſon and Inſtruction to his own and future Ages. *Tacitus*'s Writings, a Satyr and Reproach upon the laſt.

In

In Style and Compoſition, *Tacitus* is conciſe and ſmart, *Livy* diffuſive and grand. *Tacitus*'s Metaphors are ſhort Flaſhes, which have ſometimes more of the affected Poetaſter, than of the natural and equal Sublimity which abounds in *Livy*.

Tacitus has too many Actors or Figures in his Piece which breed Confuſion: *Livy*'s Characters are not over crowded, but appear diſtinct and full. He gives every Action its true Proportion and Deſcription. The Parts are duly ordered, juſtly arranged, and beautifully connected; whence ariſes a Whole regular and coherent.

Words cannot be more happily contrived or placed to convey the Senſe, than in *Livy*. His Deſcriptions are ſo natural that they are preſent Realities to the Eye; as his Sentiments are ſo juſt, that they are rather Conviction, than Perſuaſion. In *Tacitus*, you are ſometimes to wait a while, to look backwards and forwards, into your own Breaſt, and into the Opinions of others, before you can come at his Meaning from his Words. The Language of *Livy* exactly anſwers the Senſe; and you are under no Difficulty to take his Meaning upon the firſt Reading. But the Language of

Tacitus

Tacitus is too narrow, if any Thing, for the Senſe; which will bear dilating in your own Mind: You may ſtand a while to digeſt a Thought, which you find too big to take in at firſt Sight.

In *Livy*'s Speakers, you have the maſculine Eloquence of the high-ſpirited *Roman*. In *Tacitus* too often, the affected Flouriſhes of a declamatory Pedant.

Upon other Occaſions, *Tacitus* is unſeaſonably philoſophical, and boyiſhly eloquent: As where the *Reatineans*, upon a Project being formed of diverting the *Tiber* to prevent its over-flowing, preſume to inform a *Roman* Senate, "That the Direction of Nature was "beſt in all natural Things; and that the "River, when bereft of its auxiliary Streams, "would flow with diminiſhed Grandeur[a]."

Livy upon ſuch an Occaſion, or any uncommon Appearance in Nature, would relate no more than the bare Fact; or perhaps add, that the Prodigy was expiated.

Tacitus where a ſeeming Irregularity in the common Courſe of Things has given Occaſion

[a] Ann. 1. 79.

to

to ignorant Antiquity to run into the Fable and Miracle, is not careful to refute vulgar I[illegible]rs, and remove popular Prejudices; but often improves the Abſurdities of Antiquity. *Livy* chuſes rather to undeceive his Reader, by aſſigning natural Cauſes for what was before deemed miraculous.

Livy pleaſes, engages, and tranſports the Reader by the moſt natural Eloquence in the World. *Tacitus* would ſtrike and aſtoniſh by the Wonderful; — the laboured Deſcription, and the pointed Wit; — diſplays the Head more than the Heart;— the Courtier, the Politician, and the Pedant, more than the plain honeſt Man, and ſerious Moraliſt.

Livy's Art is ſo finely concealed, that you ſee nothing but Nature:— Nature with a ſublimer Air indeed, and ſomewhat a lovelier Caſt than common; but ſtill his Nature, his very Sublimity is natural. But *Tacitus* has a ſtately Pride, and affected Grandeur. *Livy* is raiſed, yet natural; lofty, yet plain and eaſy. *Tacitus* is not great, but monſtrous, diſproportioned, and diſagreeable.

Livy paints from Nature and the common Appearances and Effects of Paſſion. *Tacitus* enters into the inmoſt Soul of Man, and drags

drags into Light all the darker Tribe of corrupt and baſe Affections.

Livy's Sublimity ariſes from the Greatneſs of the Idea conveyed, the Majeſty of the Image, and the real Circumſtances of the Fact, or the Similitudes made Uſe of to illuſtrate the Fact. *Tacitus* is ſhort, where ſublime. His Sublimity ſometimes conſiſts more in Sound than Senſe; in Wit, Repartee, labour'd Expreſſion and tedious Deſcription, than heroic Deeds or noble Images.

Even Reproof, where given in *Livy*, is with Dignity. In *Tacitus*, with low Scurrility. In *Livy*, the Reprover ſhews a ſerious Senſe of Injuries ſuffered, or Wrongs done, or apprehended: *Tacitus*'s Reprovers are mere Raillers: Retailers of perſonal Scandal; and diſplay the Author's wanton Wit and ſcurrilous Temper, more than their own Innocence tarniſhed, or Rights invaded, or Danger feared, or Damage done.

Livy raiſes Pity and Compaſſion in his Deſcriptions of the Unfortunate and Miſerable: *Tacitus* ſtrikes you with Horror, and would raiſe your Indignation againſt both Gods and Men.

Our

Our two Writers reſemble in ſome Reſpects thoſe two great Maſters in their Art, *Michael Angelo*, and *Raphael Urbin*, and what the Conniſſeurs in Painting tell us of their different Taſtes. *Tacitus* is, like *Michael*, fond of the Horrid, the Cruel, the Shocking and Frightful: *Livy*, like *Raphael*, delights moſt in the Graceful, the Noble, the Beauteous and Divine. *Michael*'s beloved Object was a Wretch in Tortures or the Agonies of Death: *Raphael*'s the Charms of a pious, an humble and heavenly *Madonna*.

Nothing can more juſtly anſwer the Character of our great Hiſtorian, than that of this Painter. His Colours, they ſay, are of the moſt charming Elegance. His Airs were moſt noble, with the ſweeteſt Simplicity: His Pieces had Grace with Propriety; and his Compoſition was rich and abundant, but with Gravity and Diſcretion. His Attitudes were grand and graceful; and Nature herſelf was ſcarce ſo beautiful as ſhe appeared in his Drawings; for he copied not from her, but from the Idea he had of her.

With Reſpect to the Morality of our two Writers, *Livy* relates his Story in the plaineſt and juſteſt Manner; and you are commonly left

left to form your own Reflections upon it, and to Moralize as you pleaſe. *Tacitus* rather twiſts his Story in order to introduce his own Obſervations. He makes a random Uſe of his Wit: *Livy* is Wiſe with Diſcretion. *Tacitus* is preſumptious and dogmatical; and ſubmits nothing to the Judgment of the Reader: When *Livy* ſpeaks in his own Perſon, 'tis ſo rarely that you are all Attention; and 'tis with ſo much Modeſty and Goodneſs, that you cannot blame him, except it were for ſaying no more.

Where you have Reflections of the Moral Kind in *Livy*, they are moſt happily introduced, and upon the juſteſt Occaſions; — are pertinent and directly applicable to the Subject in Hand; and farther a common Reader would ſcarce extend them. *Tacitus*'s Maxims are untowardly brought in; and not always in Seaſon. The Reader is apt to view them as detached Pieces of Wiſdom, applicable to other States, Times, and Occaſions, rather than the Preſent.

Tacitus inſtructs by the dry Formality of Precept: *Livy* by the engaging Perſuaſion of Example. *Tacitus*'s Writings have a ſpeculative Caſt: *Livy*'s Hiſtory is compoſed for

Life/

Life and Action. *Tacitus* will fill your Head. *Livy* will imbue your Heart.

If *Livy* makes any Reflection upon Men or Things: — Upon the Corruption of the Times, Depravity of Manners, and the Source of all Miſery, the Decay of Religion; he does it with the ſerious Air of one deeply affected with the Love of his Country, and ſadly concerned for its declining Happineſs and Glory. But *Tacitus* ſeems to indulge a malicious Rancour of Soul; which diſpoſes him to reflect on Perſons more than Things: And where he moralizes, it ſeems often to proceed from a Fondneſs to diſplay his own Sagacity, rather than to inſtruct, or amend Mankind.

Tacitus's fine Thoughts are the Product of Study, and a refining Head: *Livy*'s noble Sentiments, the Reſult of ſuperior good Senſe, and an honeſt Heart.

Livy ſometimes omits a Speech, where the Reader expects it, and imagines it might be introduced with the greateſt Propriety; as when *Scipio* firſt arrives at the Armies in *Spain* [b]. *Tacitus* catches at every Opportunity to harangue. In the Speeches of *Livy*, the Man-

[b] L. 26.

ners and Character of the Speakers, are preſerved with the greateſt Decorum: In *Tacitus* the Wit and Politician ſhew themſelves upon all Occaſions.

He tells us indeed that the Centurion, the Soldier, the Barbarian, the Citizen, or the Slave did, or ſpoke, or thought as he relates; but 'tis generally *Tacitus* that makes the Speech, conducts the Action, and forms the Thought; and from Head to Tail all his Speakers, *Plebes*, *Primores*, *Juventus*, *Senes*, *Agmen Romanum*, are all Politicians. *Tacitus* is like ſome of the Writers of our modern Comedies, who have no other Deſign in their Productions, than to diſplay their own Genius: Nothing is leſs apparent than Nature and common Life: All the Actors have a Taſte for Intrigue; and all the Speakers, be they Courtiers or Footmen, are Maſters of Wit and Repartee.

The Moral and Policy in *Livy*, exactly anſwer the Characters to whom they are aſcribed;—— riſe naturally from the preſent Occaſion, flow from the Nature and Courſe of Things, could ſeem to be no where ſo properly applied as upon the preſent Subject, and are rather Part of the Hiſtory or Fact, than ſpeculative Truths; in *Tacitus*, beſides the Im-

Impropriety of the Application to the Speakers, the Sentiments themſelves are too refined, cool, and abſtracted for the Urgency of Buſineſs, and the Heat and Tide, or rather Storm of Action in which they are often introduced.

Livy is generous and open, like *Germanicus*. *Tacitus* dark and ſuſpicious, like *Tiberius*. In *Livy* is a Complacency of Heart upon the Recital of any virtuous Deed, or the Succeſs of any gallant Enterprize. He ſeems to join in the Applauſe given to extraordinary Merit, and to ſhare in the Glory and Happineſs procured by the Exertion of any diſtinguiſhed Virtue. *Tacitus* ſeems to gratify a Keenneſs of Appetite, and Malignity of Spirit when he diſplays any enormous Villainy. He dwells with ſeeming Pleaſure on the Faults and Follies of Mankind;—— is fond of Scandal; eaſy of Belief where Wickedneſs is reported, but a very Infidel on the Part of Virtue; one would imagine, he ſcarce thought it had a Being in the World.

If an Inſinuation is admitted againſt any Man's Character or Conduct in *Livy*, it ſeems purpoſely related to make his Innocence appear the brighter upon further Enquiry. *Livy* ſeems to act a natural and agreeable Part, when

he juſtifies, and vindicates injur'd Merit: If any good Quality is admitted in one of *Tacitus*'s Characters, it ſeems but a prelude to the bad ones: If he allows ſomething to Candour and Juſtice, it is but to gain Attention to his bolder Scandals. He applauds but in order to accuſe; and never ſeems better pleas'd than when he blackens.

Livy would defend the worſt of Men from unjuſt Slanders, and is willing to believe the beſt of Mankind. *Tacitus* conceals nothing that the worſt of Men, from Paſſion, or wicked Views, ſay of the beſt; nay, frequently adds a Poignancy and witty Malice, to the Scandals thrown upon his beſt Characters.

Tacitus, like a *Dutch* Painter, draws the moſt ugly Likeneſſes; as *Livy* has ennobled his virtuous Characters, and given them an Air and Dignity, which perhaps mere Mortals never had.

Was I to paint their Faces (from their Characters as Writers) I ſhould give to *Livy* an open, generous Countenance, with a full and benevolent Eye, a majeſtic and divine Air, tho' ſoftened by the tenderer Paſſions, and humaner Virtues. If I hit his Mein aright, you would at firſt Sight take him for

your

your Friend, and the Friend of Virtue, Liberty and Mankind. By examining his Features more cloſely, you would conceive a greater Love and Eſteem for him, and by dwelling on his Face you would be ſtill the more captivated.

Tacitus I ſhould diſtinguiſh by a dark, malevolent Aſpect; with a Mixture of Craft, Trouble and Diſorder in his Features;—— ſuch a Trouble, as proceeds from no Pity or tender Paſſion, but from Indignation, Chagrin, or Guilt. His Eye ſhould be quick and lively, but ſquinting: You would take him for a deep and ſubtil Sharper, as he ſhould ſeem to take you for a Pickpocket.

Was any but Mortal Agency concerned in the Productions of our two Authors, I ſhould ſay, that upon Occaſion, *Tacitus* might have had for his Prompter ſome unhappy Demon, and that *Livy*'s Pen was directed by an Angel's Hand.

Livy writes with a Mind at Eaſe and in Temper. *Tacitus* like one under Vexation and Diſcontent. *Livy* tranſports you into a Kind of pleaſing Enthuſiaſm. *Tacitus* perplexes, pains and ſhocks you. *Livy*'s Heroes are Gods. *Tacitus*'s Gods are Devils.

In

In the Annaliſt, you have Sophiſtry in Argument, Altercation in Diſpute, an extravagant Greatneſs of Thought, an over-laboured Deſcription, a falſe Tender, pointed Witticiſm, disjointed Sentiments and an affected Metaphor. In *Livy*, the Juſtneſs of Reaſon, the fine Imagination, the natural Deſcription, the ſofteſt Humanity, the manly Wiſdom, the good Heart, the clear Head, and an equal Style.—— Beauty of Compoſition, Truth of Character, and a juſt Imitation of Nature in each particular.

Livy's Hiſtory is that of a Republic, a State or Community with all its Connections, Intereſts, Dependencies, and various Fortune. *Tacitus* confines himſelf more to the Lives and Deaths of particular and ſometimes private Men, their Virtues and Vices; which have not always a viſible Connection with the Public.

The Annaliſt relates Things, without that Regularity, Order and Perſpicuity, as well as void of that Complacency of Heart, which almoſt every where ſhews itſelf in our Hiſtorian. Let us make the beſt Apology we can for *Tacitus*, and aſcribe his unhappy Manner to his unhappy Subject; which was itſelf a Scene of Vice, Miſrule and Confuſion; incapable

pable of being treated in that Order, which the Adminiſtrations of a regular State exhibit; and not fitted to inſpire that Comfort, which the Review of *Roman* Virtue in its Aſcent to Fame, — in its Ages of Gold naturally affords.

Livy had great Advantages, which *Tacitus* very juſtly laments the Loſs of. That Period of Hiſtory, which remains in *Livy*, is full of the grandeſt and moſt important Actions, and the brighteſt Examples. Reading his Hiſtory, is like travelling through ſome delightful Wood, which has, beſides a general Beauty, ſome particular Openings that give the moſt charming Views. Military Glory, diſintereſted Integrity, a Poverty that diſgraces the Pride of Kings, an ardent Love of the Public, and extended Conqueſts are the Objects, that frequently meet your Eyes in peruſing this illuſtrious Writer. In him you have Law, Order, Diſcipline, Simplicity of Manners, Love of true Glory, Dignity of Office, Majeſty of Character, domeſtic Virtue, civil Accompliſhments, honeſt Policy, and a growing Empire.

In *Tacitus* you have Miſrule, Diſorder and Artifice; ſelfiſh Paſſions, infamous Ends, Proſtitution of Character, Meanneſs in Office, general Corruption of Morals, the Luſtre

of

of the *Roman* Name tarnished by the most abject Slavery at Home, and Rapine, Ambition, and Cowardice Abroad.

Hence it is, among other Causes, that you take up *Livy* with Pleasure; peruse him with Eagerness, and lay him down with Regret. *Tacitus* (after you are acquainted with his Manner and Subject) you enter upon as a Task, and consequently read him with Uneasiness, throw him by with Pleasure, and resume him with Reluctancy. *Livy* never tires; *Tacitus* does not often please. You might for Ages dwell with *Livy*. You may call by the Way on *Tacitus*. But good as the Entertainment sometimes proves, it will not engage or detain you long: You are more willing to be gone at last, than thankful for what you have received. For what virtuous and well-educated Spirit would choose to dwell with Vanity and Ill-nature, with the Horrors of Guilt and Tyranny, with a degenerate World, and with a slumbering Providence?

The Author of these Observations has at least the Satisfaction of having brought them to a Conclusion; and hopes he is hereby freed from any future Occasion of consulting this unhappy Writer.

F I N I S.

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Hunter, Thomas
Observations on Tacitus

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